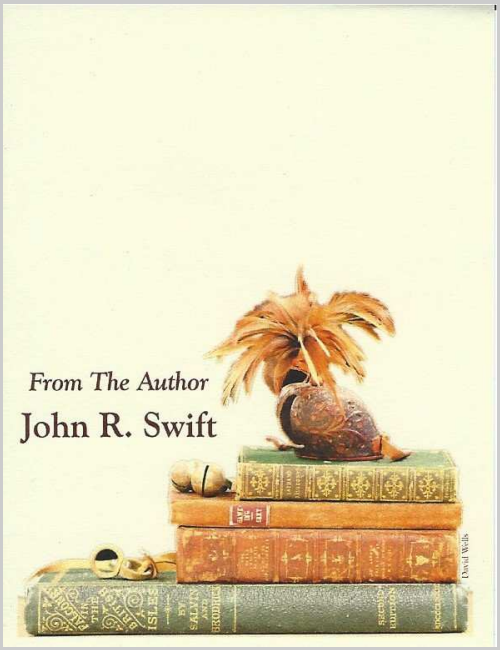
Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal and the West York Militia-1751 to 1823

John R. Swift-Retired Curator
The Archives of Falconry

From The Author

John R. Swift



The Archives of Falconry is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity. Our mission is to collect, preserve, and interpret global falconry history, art, literature, and material culture. We have recently emerged from under the protective wings of The Peregrine Fund, and are embarking on an ambitious strategic plan to increase global accessibility to our collection and the unique stories within. Visit us at falconry.org

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Thornton

John R. Swift became interested in Colonel Thomas Thornton while utilizing James Edmund Harting's *Bibliotheca Accipitraria* as a falconry book collecting guide. The Falconer's Tea Urn presented to Colonel Thornton prompted John to expand his falconry collecting to all things "Thornton". He amassed a large repository of written and pictorial evidence of Colonel Thornton's sporting activities which he utilized in his publications about Colonel Thornton. They are as follows:

Colonel Thomas Thornton Of Thornville Royal. (2014). 225 pp.
Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal and the West York Militia. (2016). 256 pp.
The Court-Martial of Lieutenant William Wadman by Colonel Thornton, 1794. (2016). 62 pp.
The Court-Martial of Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, 1795. (2016). 66 pp.
The Memorial of Thomas Thornton Esq. by Thomas Thornton, 1796. (2016). 70 pp.
An Elucidation of a Mutinous Conspiracy by Thomas Thornton, 1800. (2016). 90 pp.

Back Cover-The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn courtesy of the Archives of Falconry.

Front Cover-Colonel Thomas Thornton with his Gyrfalcon *Sans Quartier*. and his Greyhound *Major*. Note the medallion entitled The Triumph of Truth presented by the ladies at Tiverton in 1795 Courtesy of Alexander Guest. Philip Reinagle (1749-1833) ca. 1795.

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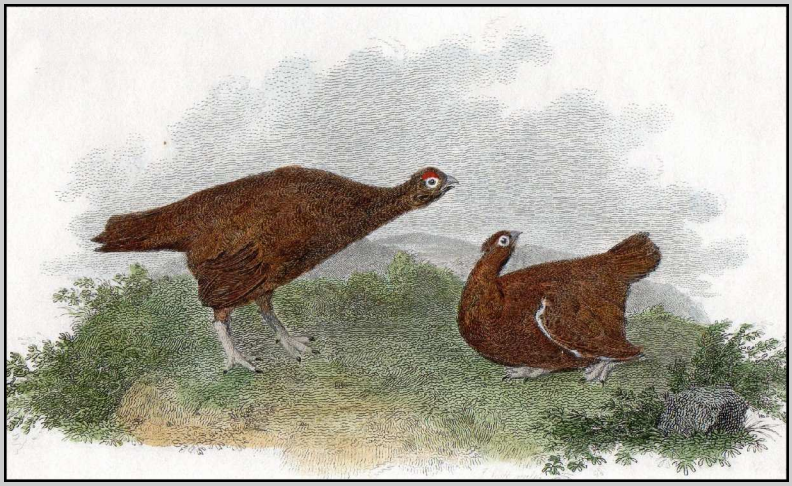


Red Grouse Eng. John Scott

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Dedicated to Colonel Thomas Thornton
Whose Passion for All Field Sports
Revived Falconry in Great Britain
and Made Him

The King of Field Sports

During his Reign at
Thornville Royal
1789 to 1805

Wildfowl Eng. John Scott
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal
and the West York Militia

A Comprehensive Biography Along with a
Visual Record of All His Sporting Activities
Including the Animals and Apparatus Utilized.

John Resler Swift Retired Curator The Archives of Falconry

Colonel Thornton Sportsman

Philip Reinagle ***Colonel Thornton*** 1806

This portrait of Colonel Thornton first appeared in his *A Sporting Tour through France in 1802 (1806)* and illustrates the variety of sports in which he excelled. Depicted are: Two hunting horns, a rifle, a seine net with weights, a fish landing net, a fox-hunting whip, a fishing creel, a jockey cap, a gunpowder flask, hound couplings, a wading pole or walking stick and a leather shot bandolier. The Great Pike caught in Scotland and a vignette of the 1804 race in which Alicia rode in a horse race which she lost to neighbor Captain Flint appear at the bottom.

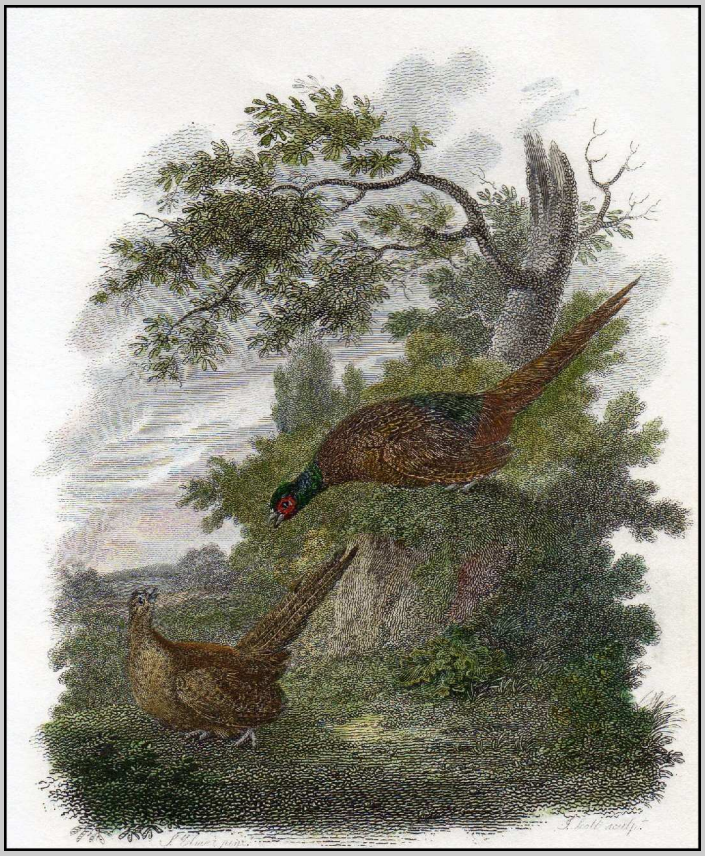
Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal and the West York Militia

Introduction

Colonel Thornton was one of the most intriguing and flamboyant personalities to have ever been active in British field sports. Other notable sportsmen have achieved great success in a specific field sport but no one has ever accomplished as much in so many different areas. He was a recognized expert in foxhunting, shooting, personal feats of athletics, falconry, coursing, horse racing and improved several strains of hounds as well as pointers, setters, and greyhounds. He was a host of exceptional renown often retiring early in the morning after enjoying wine from his well-established cellars. He would rise with little sleep before his guests and spend the entire day in the field. A well-known womanizer, he supported, encouraged and entered a young female companion into a horse race in 1805 with the most famous male jockey of the day. She won the race establishing herself as the first woman to ever best a man in a sporting event. He frequently took his entire entourage on numerous "sporting tours" and recorded his travels in two beautifully illustrated histories of those tours. These accounts of activities are credited with awakening a British public to the sporting activities available in the "wilds" of the Scottish Highlands. Colonel Thornton commissioned the most popular and highly regarded animal and portrait painters of the period. His collection of art was considered the finest sporting art anywhere and was interspersed with a few paintings from the "Old Masters." He even purchased a nearby estate from the ruling family of the UK adding the designation "Royal" to his original established family home of Thornville. Colonel Thornton would become the "King of British Sport" for sixteen years at one of the most famous 18th century sporting establishments "Thornville Royal." He spent all of his inheritance supporting his lavish sporting lifestyle and died while living in a rented house in Paris, reliving his life in the local pubs, singing old hunting tunes and toasting the memories of his most notable friends and hunting companions.

Prior to his death he sold almost everything he had accumulated, resulting in its dispersal into numerous stately homes and mansions throughout Europe and the UK. Estate taxes in modern times have forced the sale of many valuable collections which has resulted in numerous Thornton items coming up for sale at the most famous auction houses. Their illustrated catalogues have enabled an interested public to glimpse what Colonel Thornton accomplished and possessed. Book publishers of the time would also engage accomplished engravers who utilized the Colonel's original art for illustration resulting in a wider public reception. However, even those earlier works became scarce and expensive until photographic digitization and the Internet made many of them readily available. Many of these images were not credited to Thornton's ownership as the original name or title was lost to history. In addition many of the early periodicals have also been digitized by Google books and made searchable providing accessibility to specific references about Colonel Thornton.

The cross referencing of all these collected materials has provided the most accurate and comprehensive chronicle of Colonel Thornton's life to date. It is likely that more materials will be discovered and added to the legend and history of Colonel Thomas Thornton.



Pheasants Eng. John Scott

One of the more common game birds found in England. Colonel Thornton recommends them for goshawks. He is reputed to be the last falconer to take a goshawk from a nest in England as they are extinct as a nesting species.

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

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Waiting for Colonel Thornton?

Horses, Dogs and Hawks

Acknowledgements

No project can ever be completed alone so I wish to thank the following:

Kent Carnie	Whose tenacity and knowledge of falconry history helped found The Archives of Falconry where he served as its curator from 1986 to 2007.
David Wells	My associate and friend for eight years who helped make important falconry materials available and utilized by the online world falconry community through his photography and computer skills.
Robert Collins	Whose desire to preserve the memory of departed falconry friends developed the Archives Rendezvous with the Wall of Remembrance into an annual event attracting national and international falconers while serving as curator from 2013 to 2021.
Peter B. Devers	The creator of the *Dead Falconers Tour* and the only one who can drive all of us on the left side of the road in the UK. His ability to locate long lost and obscure falconry materials including falconer's graves is well known.
Tony Huston	Who helped The Archives of Falconry obtain the Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn and secured the year-long loan of the painting of Colonel Thornton with his falcon and greyhound from Alexander Guest.
Robert Berry	Whose generosity secured the Thornton urn for all falconers as well as construct the Archives facility itself.
Natalie Nicholson	Who was one of the original *Dead Falconers Tour* members and has always encouraged my interest in falconers and falconry history through book selling activities for both the Archives and falconers.
Bill Mattox	Who proofed my *Bibliotheca Accipitraria II* so many times he could recite it by heart.
Michael Brander	The original Thorntonian who actually retraced the Colonel's original sporting tours throughout Northern England and Scotland.
Alan Gates	Who trekked to Old Thornville in Yorkshire in the hope of obtaining photographs of the original Thornton family seat. Like Michael Brander 50 years earlier, he was turned down.
Tony James	Who loaned then donated the Colonel Thornton shotgun on display.

Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal and the West York Militia

Acknowledgements

Roger Upton	A UK falconer who published two significant historical falconry books which included information on Colonel Thornton.
Alexander Guest	Who loaned the portrait of Colonel Thornton for use on the front cover of this biography and exhibition at the Archives of Falconry.
Arthur Credland	Who included the unusual weapons used by the sporting Colonel in his articles in *Arms and Armour* journals.
Steve Hipperson	Who photographed St. Martin's Church at Allerton Castle where Colonel Thornton's mother is interred.
Paul Beecroft	Who finds anything I need or gets everything and anything done in the UK.
Castle Howard	The beautiful paintings of Colonel Thornton and his mother Mary are reproduced by kind permission of Hon. Simon Howard.
Tim Martin	A well known NY antique silver dealer at S. J. Shrubsole who loaned photographs of the silver Epergne and Col. Thornton's Black Jacks.
Allerton Castle	Who are actively restoring, recording and preserving the historic site of Thornville Royal even though Thornville Royal is no longer present.
Robert Thornton	Whose genealogical research helped him write a biography of Colonel Thornton, which was utilized in the preparation of this biography.
Thomas N. Thornton	Who has published *The Thornton Families of England* with a chapter dedicated to the sporting Colonel.
Steve Bodio	Who shared his knowledge about shotguns in an article about the Colonel's shotgun with modern enthusiasts.

Special Thanks

Vicki Swift	Who has put up with all my crazy falconry related activities which included my being away for many Thanksgivings at NAFA Field Meets when I served as auction chairman and Field Meet Chairman. During all my activities both YMCA and falconry related she remains my staunchest supporter and my biggest fund raiser.

Philip Reinagle ***After the Hunt*** Eng. *John Scott*

The Sportsman's Repository-1820

Biography

A Descriptive Chronological Biography of His Life

Biography

George Morland ***Colonel Thomas Thornton and Spaniels*** ca. 1795

The Thornton family's presence in England has been recorded since the Norman invasion in 1066, but thus far the written evidence of the branch of Thorntons that produced the famous "Sporting Colonel" begins only with his grandfather, Sir William Thornton. For three generations the Thorntons had distinguished themselves as politicians and soldiers. They fully supported the Glorious Revolution of 1688, which ousted the Catholic Stuarts and installed the joint monarchs King William and Queen Mary from the Protestant Netherlands. William Thornton was such an active and zealous supporter of the rights and privileges of his Yorkshire countrymen that he was selected to present a speech at Court to Queen Anne, successor to William and Mary. The speech was given to further the Articles of Union between England and Scotland in 1707, which created the United Kingdom. The Queen was so impressed with it that she conferred upon William the honor of Knighthood. He became Sir William Thornton. Sir William's son, also a William, father of our Sir Thomas Thornton, was born in 1712.

The Jacobites (supporters of James II, another Stuart) returned to Scotland in 1745 and enlisted the support of Scottish Highlanders in an attempt to regain the throne. William Thornton, a supporter of King George II, founded a militia of Yorkshire men, recruiting 100 men at his own expense, and marched them north to Scotland to meet up with General Hawley's army. The army engaged the Jacobites at Falkirk and suffered a serious defeat. Only William Thornton's men distinguished themselves, but three quarters of them were slain. After the battle, William Thornton was reduced to hiding in a damp closet for three

days while the proprietor, a woman and a Scot, fed him and misdirected searches. He contracted malaria, from which he suffered for the rest of his life. Despite the £1,000 reward offered for his capture, he returned to the army and fought with distinction with the Duke of Cumberland at the Battle of Culloden, where the Jacobites were defeated. After the war, William Thornton returned to thank the woman who had saved him and rewarded her with a lifetime pension.

After he returned home to Yorkshire, William continued his service to the country by becoming a Member of Parliament with the encouragement and support of his friend the Earl of Rockingham. His first wife, Isabella, died in 1748, and in 1749 William took as his second wife Mary, the daughter of John Myster of Epsom, Surrey. They had three children: a daughter, Mary, born in 1749 (d. 1842); a son, Thomas, and a second daughter whose name and date of birth has not been discovered.

Young Thomas Thornton with Mastiff

Young Thomas Thornton
Miniature portrait on Ivory.
Courtesy Carnegie Museum of Art

Thomas's older sister, Mary, married Samuel Francis Barlow of Middlethorpe who also served with Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Thornton in the militia. Thomas Thornton was born in London in either 1751 or 1752. The exact year is not known as no actual birth certificate is currently available; later activities in which his age and the year of its occurrence are actually known have helped to deduce these estimated birth years.

Like many children of wealthy families, in about 1755 Thomas was sent to boarding school at Charter House in London, a school that still exists today. He became ill during his teen years and returned to Old Thornville to recuperate. Upon recovery he returned to Charter House, but found that he had fallen behind his classmates, so a decision was made when he was about 14 years old that he would attend another school. Accompanied by his father, he first visited the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, then the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. In 1766, he settled on Glasgow University, which best suited his ideas and where his father held an appointment. Some of his companions at the university were Lords Rivers and Seaforth, Sir Thomas Wallace, and Messrs. Windham, Sheend, Kennedy, Hill, and Wilson. While attending the university Thomas enjoyed all the sports of the field with these companions, but apparently not to the detriment of his studies.

He was also known as a keen rider and one of the best and most scientific breeders of horses and dogs. He spared no expense on his stables and kennels at his home, Old Thornville, and they were regarded as the best in the country.

In 1769, Thomas Thornton's father William finally succumbed to the illnesses he contracted while hiding in the Scottish closet in 1745 during the Jacobite Rebellion. Thomas came into a great fortune as the heir to the family estate. Having not yet come of age, Thomas Thornton continued at Glasgow University while his mother managed the estate and business affairs.

Upon attaining his majority (age 21) in 1772, he returned to the family estate of Old Thornville and began building a sporting establishment unequaled in Great Britain. Thomas had been born into a family of the burgeoning "landed gentry" whose estates generated enough revenues to allow the owners a life of leisure pursuing whatever interests they enjoyed. He also soon joined his father's West York Militia and was given the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was thenceforth referred to as "Colonel Thornton."

Colonel Thornton founded the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain in 1772 and many members of local sporting families joined him in the association. The headquarters for the club was at Bournbridge, Cambridgeshire.

George Walker ***Colonel Thornton Hawking*** 1814
The Costumes of Yorkshire

Sawrey Gilpin ***Colonel Thornton Taking Up His Falcon From A Heron*** ca. 1780

During the month of March they went kite and crow hawking, then in April and May they hawked near Barton Mills and Brandon in Suffolk. The hawks were flown on Saturdays, Mondays, and Wednesdays. As with most clubs, professional falconers trained the hawks and falcons and subscribers paid the operating costs and enjoyed participation in the actual hunts.

Colonel Thomas Thornton served successfully as manager until 1781, at which time George Walpole, the 3rd Earl of Orford succeeded him. The entire club presented Thornton with a silver gilt urn in gratitude for his service in providing them with a unique sporting experience. The tea urn is engraved with the names of the club members along with the family crests of the Earl of Orford and Colonel Thornton on opposite sides. A goshawk on a hare adorns the lid of the urn.

The Thornton Tea Urn
The Archives of Falconry in Boise, Idaho

Hawking by Colonel Thornton
The Sporting Magazine January 1793

For 17 years, the Colonel conducted his sporting activities from his original family home in North Yorkshire known as Old Thornville. During this period his sporting accomplishments were numerous, varied, and widely reported in sporting publications of the day. He jumped his own height of five feet nine inches from a standing start. In a walking match he traveled four miles in thirty-two minutes and one half second. He was reported to have leaped six five-barred gates on foot and then repeated the feat on horseback. Colonel Thornton also rode down a hare on horseback and picked it up, to the amazement of many assembled witnesses. He won a four-mile horse race in 1778 in Knavesmire on a horse called Sir Tom Thumb, against a Mr. Hare riding a horse called Tu Quoque.

Upon taking up residence at Old Thornville, Colonel Thornton enjoyed foxhunting. A neighbor had started a foxhound subscription pack, requiring regular payments from members for their maintenance. Payments became irregular so Colonel Thornton took over

Sawrey Gilpin ***Merkin*** 1790

Sawrey Gilpin ***Modish*** 1788

the entire pack at his own expense, a costly proposition, but he soon established it as the preeminent foxhound pack in Northern England. Foxhounds Old Conqueror, Merkin, Modish, and others soon became famous to every foxhunter in Great Britain. Soon after retiring to Old Thornville, the Colonel made a visit to London to renew his acquaintanceship with his old university friends and to join the recently formed Savoir Vivre club. The original plan was that the club would be patronized by men of genius and talent, but it soon descended into licentiousness and debauchery, with dice and cards the primary source of gambling. Curiously, Colonel Thornton did not participate in this entertainment and preferred to provide a way out of the many hastily made and often inebriated wagers. He actually had a marble slab made and placed over the chimney piece at Thornville Royal with the following inscription:

"Utinam, hanc veris amisic impleam!
[In the hope that we may remain true friends]
By the established rule of this house all bets are considered to be off, if either of the parties, by letter, or other wise, pay into the hands of the landlord, one guinea, by five the next day."

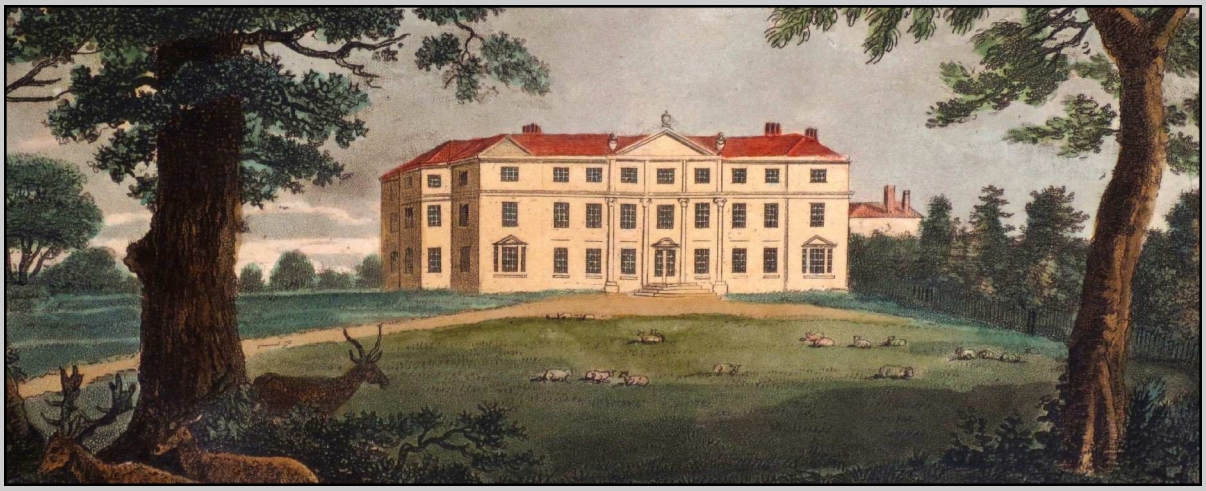
Colonel Thornton Driving a Tandem on his Tour of Northern England and Scotland
George Garrard 1760-1826 (ca. 1786)

As Colonel Thornton had followed nearly every sporting diversion available to him in Yorkshire, he hungered to see what new experiences he might enjoy in the Highlands of Scotland. Thornton began a series of lavish sporting excursions, journeying there regularly over a 17-year period. He spared no expense on these tours, hiring his own boat and carriages, a groom, dog handlers, valet, waggoner, and falconers along with all the hawks, and every type of sporting apparatus necessary for his activities. He developed the concept of an evening “encampment” by which he could stop wherever he wanted to partake of any sporting opportunities regardless of accommodations. He carried everything necessary to provide comfort and sustenance for himself and his guests while they were encamped.

The Duke of Gordon presented some land in Scotland to Colonel Thornton, upon which he constructed a small, gothic-style mansion called Thornton Castle in order to reduce his travel time to and from Yorkshire.

He took along Mr. George Garrard, a rising pupil of the well-known sporting artist Sawrey Gilpin, to record the various events and the Scottish countryside. Many years later Thornton presented a manuscript along with drawings of the trips for literary publication to an old school friend who was living in reduced circumstances. It was published as *A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and Great Part of the Highlands of Scotland* in 1804, many years after the tours had actually ended.

Upon returning home from his 1786 Scottish tour, Thornton met the Duke of York, who had recently purchased the nearby lands and estate of Allerton Mauleverer from Lord Viscount Galway. They became friends for three years until a misunderstanding at the Boroughbridge Races terminated their fellowship.



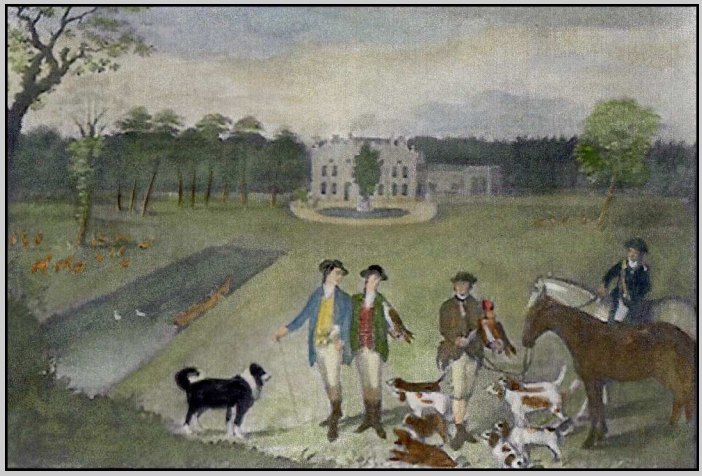
Thornville Royal in Yorkshire in 1791

Thinking there might be a change of regent due to the debilitating illness of King George III, the King's two sons, the Duke of York and his brother, the Prince of Wales, made significant improvements to Allerton Mauleverer in anticipation of it becoming a royal residence. The story is told that the Duke utilized a hill on the estate to train his soldiers stationed nearby, thereby inspiring the children's nursery rhyme "The Grand Old Duke of York." However, upon the recovery of the King and the outbreak of the Spanish War, all work immediately ceased and the estate was put up for sale in 1789. The Colonel made several proposals and a price of £110,000 (£6.2 million today) was agreed upon, with payments to be made in 12-monthly installments. The Duke of York tried to cheat the Colonel out of £5,000 of the purchase price but he was exposed and this incident may have led to the Duke's support of the Colonel's court-martial several years later.

Colonel Thornton's neighbors were astonished that he would attempt such a large purchase. To help pay for it he sold Old Thornville in 1791. Allerton Mauleverer was renamed Thornville Royal and the Colonel immediately commenced finishing the work that the Duke and Prince had started.

From Thornville Royal the Colonel reigned supreme for the next 16 years (1789–1805) over the sporting world in Great Britain. Thornton established a lavish lifestyle rarely seen in English life, rivaling that of the nobility. Here all of the Colonel's sporting activities reached a zenith and level of perfection many thought unattainable.

Thornton purchased another estate, Baythorpe Hall, just 12 miles from Scarborough on the east coast of Britain. There he built Falconer's Hall, which became his home for several months each year. Thornton and his many guests enjoyed revelry that included all forms of sport followed by sumptuous banquets with some of the most famous wines in Britain. The Colonel was known as a "six-bottle man," consuming six bottles of wine each evening. He was almost always the last to bed and the first to rise, showing no ill effects of the previous evening's drinking. His guests always were attended to first and few requests were ever denied. It has been said that no gentleman was better equipped to preside over these "banquets of hilarity" than the Colonel.

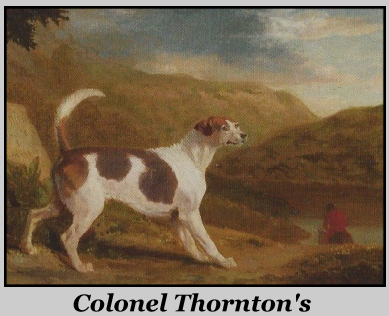


Falconer's Hall in Baythorpe ca 1800

Colonel Thornton spared no expense in acquiring works of art to adorn the main house at Thornville Royal. He engaged every well-known sporting artist of the time and assembled perhaps the most highly regarded collection of sporting paintings in the country. Sawrey Gilpin and Philip Reinagle worked under the direct supervision of Colonel Thornton and produced two of the most famous fox hunting paintings of the day, "Death of The Fox" and "Breaking Cover." Thornton also collected works of the Italian and Flemish schools with paintings by Guido, Carracci, Teniers, Wouvermans, Rubens, van Dyck, and others.

Colonel Thornton's Dash
Sawrey Gilpin 1795

Colonel Thornton's Jupiter
Sawrey Gilpin 1792



Colonel Thornton's hound Lucifer
George Garrard ca 1786

Thornton retained the services of John Paw, one of the well-known architects of the day, to design new farmhouses, dairy buildings, dog kennels, and even hunting gates to make access easier for horses and dogs through the fields and woodlands. The gates were marked with a "T" to identify Thornton's property.

Thornton either personally bred or purchased the finest animals necessary for the conduct of his desired sports. He is credited with developing the first English Pointer by crossing a foxhound with a Spanish Pointer. Reports attest to the range and skill of Dash, the most famous pointer of the day, but unfortunately none of his progeny ever measured up to his quality.

As was the practice, Thornton produced his hunting horses by crossing a "warm blood" with a thoroughbred "hot blood" to produce an easy-handling, fast, and durable horse for his sporting activities. The Colonel was also interested in horse racing, which required a quite different sort of animal. For racing he acquired his thoroughbred stock from the offspring of the most famous thoroughbred of all time, Eclipse, which had won 18 races including 11 King's Plates. Eclipse never lost a race and became the primary thoroughbred foundation sire, producing 344 winners. He is regarded as the ancestor, through the male line, of 95 percent of all contemporary thoroughbreds, including modern-day Secretariat. The primary stallion in the Colonel's stud was Jupiter, a direct son of Eclipse, which provided the Colonel with many horses with the characteristics he desired for both racing and hunting.

Thornville Royal housed many animals whose names were well written of in sporting chronicles. Merkin, Lucifer, Old Conqueror, and Modish were famous foxhounds. Dash, Pluto, and Juno were the Colonel's pointers. Major and Czarina, his greyhounds, were admired by all who coursed hare. Merryman was his famous beagle, and Pitch, a white terrier, is regarded as the foundation sire for all modern white terriers. Thornton's most famous hawks were Sans Quartier, Death, and Devil. All these names would be heard on the sporting fields of Yorkshire for decades.

Philip Reinagle's Portrait of Colonel Thornton After his Court-Martial in 1795
The Colonel is pictured with his famous greyhound *Major* and his gyrfalcon *Sans Quartier*. It is the only portrait in which he is wearing the medal *The Triumph of Truth* given to him in gratitude by his men. He wore it in Napoleon's presence hoping to gain favor for his position. The painting was displayed at The Archives of Falconry

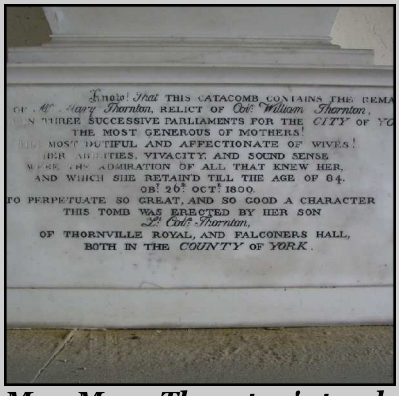
The Colonel was second to none in all of his endeavors and he spared no expense in acquiring the highest quality animals for his sporting activities. But eventually, the expense of stocking his stables, kennels, and mews, together with his outstanding hospitality, led to his financial ruin.

Life had been a whirlwind of good fortune for the Colonel in all things, including his time in the West York Militia. He served alongside his brother-in-law, Captain Samuel Francis Barlow, until one day in 1794 when his troops personally pulled him into Roborough camp in his carriage without the horses shouting triumphantly. This adulation raised the ire of fellow officers, likely jealous of the popular support his men gave him. The Duke of York who was the commander of all the local militias in Great Britain joined in supporting Thornton's court-martial for "disorderly conduct" because of the private malice of his earlier dealings with the Colonel over the purchase of Thornville Royal. The Colonel expressed his feelings about the affair in two written works: *The Memorial of Thomas Thornton, Esq. of Thornville Royal, Lieutenant-Colonel of the West York Regiment of Militia,* London: 1796 and *An Elucidation of a Mutinous Conspiracy Entered into by the Officers of the West York Militia against their Commanding Officer in the Year 1794,* London: 1800.

The Colonel was found guilty and publicly reprimanded. Then his Yorkshire neighbors consoled him by unhitching the horses from the carriage, and personally drawing the carriage once again to his hotel in triumph. They presented him with a silver medallion engraved with the words "The Triumph of Truth" and a beautiful sword to commemorate the event.

Alicia Massingham
Mrs. T., Mrs. Thornton or Meynell

Mrs. Mary Thornton
The mother of Colonel Thornton
From The Castle Howard Collection


Know! that THIS CATACOMB CONTAINS THE REMA
OF Mrs Mary Thornton, RELICT OF Colo William Thornton,
N THREE SUCCESSIVE PARLIAMENTS FOR THE CITY OF YO
THE MOST GENEROUS OF MOTHERS!
MOST DUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE OF WIVES!
HER ABILITIES, VIVACITY, AND SOUND SENSE
WERE THE ADMIRATION OF ALL THAT KNEW HER,
AND WHICH SHE RETAIND TILL THE AGE OF 64.
ON 26th OCTr 1800.
TO PERPETUATE SO GREAT, AND SO GOOD A CHARACTER
THIS TOMB WAS ERECTED BY HER SON
Lt Colo Thornton,
OF THORNVILLE ROYAL, AND FALCONERS HALL,
BOTH IN THE COUNTY OF YORK.

Mrs. Mary Thornton's tomb
St. Martins Church adjacent to
Thornville Royal
Built by Colonel Thornton

The Colonel resigned his commission in disgust and his trial soured the rest of his life. He spent his last years trying to gain support for his position that his court martial was due solely to the jealousy and lies of his fellow officers. Thornton became a supporter of the French and Napoleon, not a popular position in Great Britain, which seemed to be constantly at war with France and her allies. His position as a Whig and a Francophile did not endear him to many of his countrymen.

The Colonel was rumored to have had a long string of mistresses, but it was not until later in his life that the name of one of his consorts finally surfaced. In 1798 the Colonel, now aged 46, invited the young (18) and vivacious Alicia Massingham to live with him at Thornville Royal. She is often called Alicia Meynell, but this appears to be a name fabricated by the Colonel in order to portray her as a relative of Hugo Meynell, who was considered the father of English fox hunting. Although Alicia long believed that the Colonel would eventually marry her, he never did. Despite that, she was often referred to as Mrs. T. or Mrs. Thornton. She ruled Thornville Royal for eight years as the Colonel's consort and accompanied him on his many sporting excursions.

Two years after Alicia's arrival at Thornville Royal, Colonel Thornton's mother Mary died. She had been the matron of the house since her husband died in 1769 and had managed the household affairs during the Colonel's youth. She obviously held a strong and special place in the Colonel's heart as he built a splendid monument for her at St. Martin's Church adjacent to Thornville Royal. The monument of a son's love for his mother is still one of the prominent features of that church today.

In 1802, the Colonel decided to take a sporting tour of France with the object of seeking Napoleon's support with regards to the perceived slight he had received from the Duke of York during his court-martial, thereby regaining his reputation. He traveled with Alicia in the same luxurious style of his earlier sporting tours of Scotland.

Napoleon's Three Barrel Pistol
Thornton's Coat of Arms.
Bonhams Arms and Armour
April 6, 2006

Alicia's Race with Capt. Flint
Published by R. Cribb

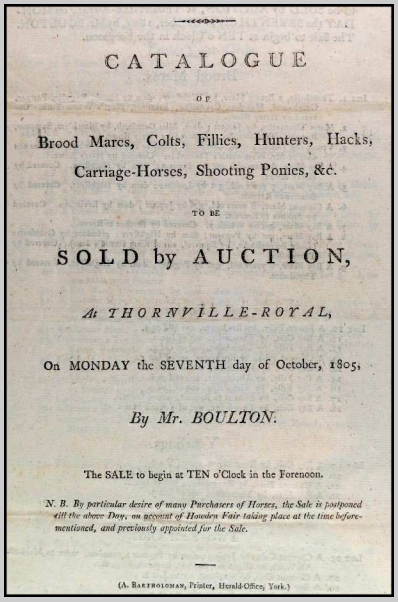
Racing Goblet
depicting Alicia and her famous race against Captain Flint in 1804.
Private collection sold at Sotheby's' Racing sale November 13, 1996

He built a special coach to carry all of his and Alicia's sporting accouterments along with a variety of sporting dogs and hunting weapons so that he could try hunting in the French style. He eagerly anticipated hunting wolves, as they were extinct in England. He documented his activities in a book published in 1806 entitled *A Sporting Tour through the Various Parts of France in the Year 1802*.

He did get a meeting with Napoleon, in which Napoleon expressed interest in the medal *The Triumph of Truth* given to the Colonel by his Yorkshire countrymen. Colonel Thornton presented Napoleon with a gift of two three-barreled pistols with the words Marengo engraved in gilt to celebrate his recent victory (1800) over the Austrians near the village of Marengo in Italy. Though the Colonel returned to France in subsequent years, the ensuing wars made travel there much more difficult.

Alicia Massingham had gained the eye of the Colonel when he was marching with his militia through the East Riding with fellow officer and Yorkshire neighbor Captain William Flint. A much younger man than Colonel Thornton, Captain William Flint [age 28] had caught the eye of Alicia's sister, Amelia, and she moved in with the Captain when Alicia joined the Colonel at Thornville Royal. As sisters Alicia and Amelia often tried to outshine each other in appearance and equipage, but Alicia clearly outdistanced her sister in one area: she was an outstanding rider. On an early morning ride in 1804, while Captain Flint was having a friendly gallop with Alicia, she challenged him to a match race to be held on the last day of the York Race Meeting in August of that year. Colonel Thornton proposed a bet of 500 guineas if Alicia won and 1,000 guineas if anyone forfeited [£30,000 and £60,000] in today's money). The proposed race garnered the attention of much of Britain, with over 100,000 in attendance, completely filling every available inn and room for miles around, much to the delight of the Yorkshire countrymen. The crowds were so large that the 6th Dragoon Guards were called in to maintain control.

Frank Buckle
Most famous jockey of his day.
Alicia defeated him in a 2 mile race.



CATALOGUE

OF

Brood Mares, Colts, Fillies, Hunters, Hacks,
Carriage-Horses, Shooting Ponies, &c.

TO BE

SOLD by AUCTION,

At THORNVILLE-ROYAL,

On MONDAY the SEVENTH day of October, 1805,

By Mr. BOULTON.

The SALE to begin at TEN o'Clock in the Forenoon.

N. B. By particular desire of many Purchasers of Horses, the Sale is postponed till the above Day, on account of Howden Fair taking place at the time before-mentioned, and previously appointed for the Sale.

(A. Bartholomew, Printer, Herald-Office, York.)

Sale Catalogue of Thornton's Horses
Robert Christie Burton purchased horses from this sale.

Never had the public witnessed a race between a man and a woman, and rumors were spread that "Mrs. Thornton" would ride astride like a man, in buckskin breeches, instead of sidesaddle as women did at that time. Some say that the Colonel himself spread the rumors in order to promote the race as well as his own stature.

Race day came and Alicia appeared wearing a lady's habit consisting of a leopard-colored bodice with blue sleeves and a buff skirt. Her mount was 20-year-old Vingarillo, which she rode in women's style (sidesaddle), while Captain Flint rode eight-year-old Brown Thornville. Alicia took the lead on the four-mile course and held it for three miles, but her horse went lame and Captain Flint came from behind and passed her near the finish line. Alicia was visibly upset at losing and challenged Captain Flint to another race, but he declined. She publicly chided his refusal in the York newspaper, resulting in further rancor between the neighbors.

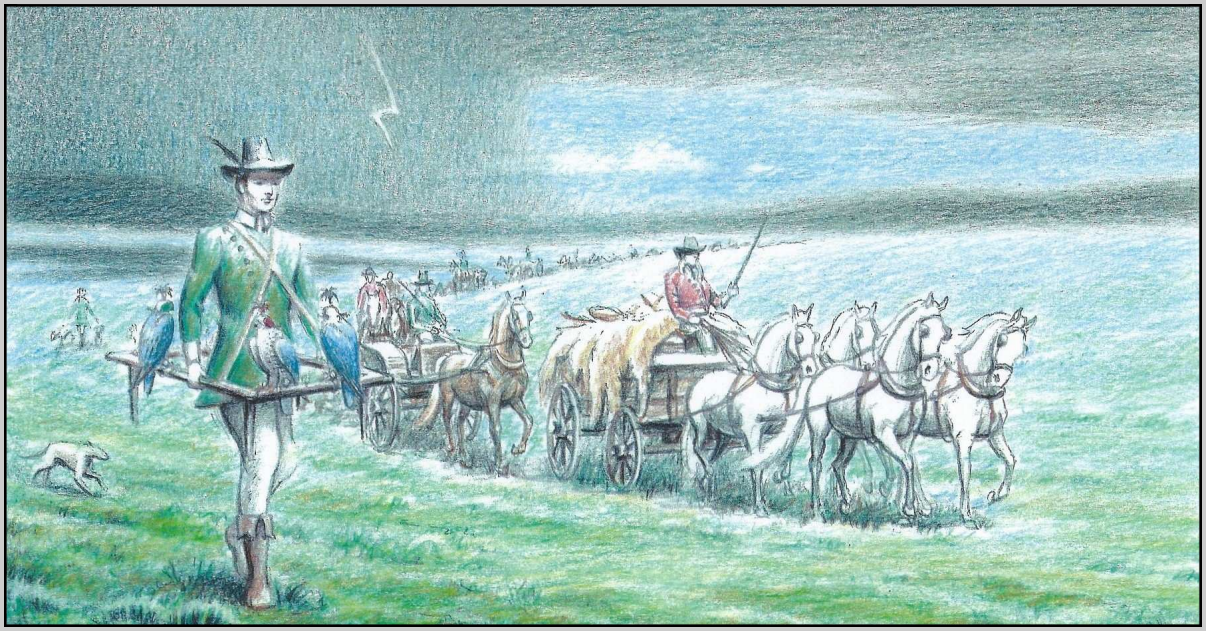
A year later, in August 1805, Alicia reached the pinnacle of her young life when she rode a race against the leading jockey of the time, Frank Buckle. The race was two miles in length and Alicia held the lead for a mile before Buckle passed her. They were never more than a length apart until the last hundred yards, when Alicia passed Buckle, becoming the first woman in history to beat a man in a sporting event.

This might have been a cause for great celebration except for an event occurring in the grand stands. Captain Flint had sought out the Colonel to confront him about not paying his wager from the previous year. An altercation occurred and Captain Flint proceeded to horsewhip the much older Colonel. The crowd intervened in support of the Colonel and separated the two. Captain Flint filed a lawsuit against Colonel Thornton but the Colonel prevailed and the decline of both men soon followed. Captain Flint never recovered his prestige and ultimately took his own life in 1832.

Immediately following the race Colonel Thornton put Thornville Royal up for sale and he auctioned off many of his horses in October 1805. A young man named Robert Christie Burton attended the sale and bought a few horses. He returned a few weeks later to purchase additional items, including some of Thornton's famous artwork. He had just come of age and wished to acquire art as well as dogs and horses from the most famous sportsman in Britain. A young George Elers was staying with the Colonel at the time and noted in his memoirs that the Colonel "pigeoned" Burton because of his youthful enthusiasm and lack of experience. Burton ran up a large bill with his purchases and the Colonel even extended the offer of carrying a note. However, Burton soon got buyer's remorse and sued the Colonel, claiming he was defrauded with fake art and sick animals. The case went to court in 1806 and Alicia supported Burton, acting like the spurned lover she was, even writing defamatory articles about Thornton for the newspaper. Alicia claimed that Col. Thornton had promised marriage but the Colonel married Eliza Cawston in July, 1806 who produced a legitimate heir.

Thornton was cleared of any wrongdoing, but the harpies of the law were taking their toll on him and his finances. By the summer of 1806 he was free of both Alicia and Robert Christie Burton. Alicia married a dashing young naval officer who had come into a fortune and left Yorkshire, never to be heard from again. Robert Christie Burton spent five years in debtors prison. After being released he was elected to Parliament, but he served only a short time and was defeated in the next election. Burton died in Paris in 1822, a year before Col. Thornton.

Thornville Royal was demolished in 1848 and four years later this Gothic style mansion was built for Lord Stourton. Today it has been renamed *Allerton Castle* and is utilized for special events under the ownership of the Rolf Foundation. Engraving ca. 1880 by Rev. F. O. Morris. *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen, in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*



Robert Katona ***Colonel Thornton's Procession to Spye Park in 1808*** 2012

The Colonel regretfully sold Thornville Royal in December, 1805 for £226,000 to Lord Stourton, who would rename it Stourton Towers. In his final days there, despite a tightening purse, the Colonel held a Christmas and New Year's celebration for his friends and local farmers, as he had every year since moving there. He left Thornville Royal on January 6th, 1806, and retired to Falconer's Hall in Baythorpe, where he would continue his sporting activities for two years.

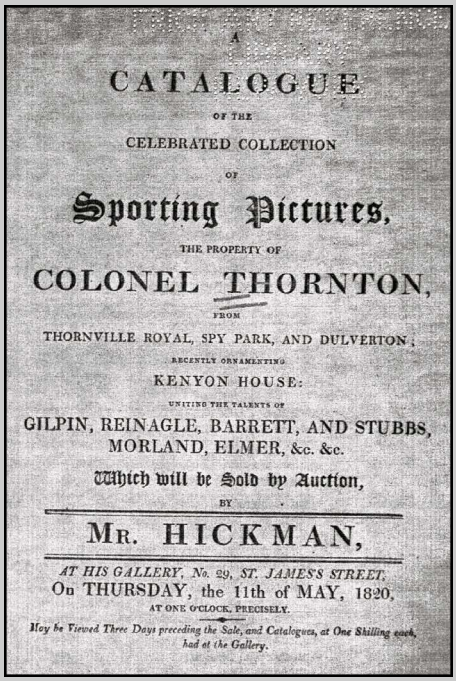
Colonel Thornton still held ownership of his house in London and it seems that this was where he met his only lawful wife. He married Eliza Cawston of Bundon, Essex, at Lambeth in July 1806. She bore the Colonel a son and legitimate heir, William Thomas Thornton.

After retiring to Falconer's Hall, he continued to carry out his sporting activities in the same lavish manner he had at Thornville for two more years. In 1808, however, he decided to abandon the North and move his establishment to Spye Park in Wiltshire to pursue hawking on Salisbury Plain. He sold Falconer's Hall and his house, "The Boudoir," in London. He rented Spye Park from the Bayntun family. As he indicated that he wished to display his own art on their walls, the Bayntuns removed their family portraits.

Colonel Thornton's move from Falconer's Hall to Spye Park was a journey of over 200 miles, which he did in the style and pageantry befitting his famous sporting persona. The long procession of carriages and wagons—which included horses, dogs of every breed, art, and wine from his famous cellars—was accomplished without breaking anything. The caravan was an object of curiosity for all who lived along the route.

Thornton continued all of his sporting activities at Spye Park, but few sporting records of his activity have been found, as it seems his fortunes were in such decline that his activities were not newsworthy. He continued to visit France, taking his hounds for sport, before the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. He gave up hawking about 1814 and made a decision to settle in France permanently in 1815. He bought a derelict chateau called Pont le Roi, now Pont-sur-Seine, southeast of Paris, and rented the Chateau de Chambord. He styled himself as the Marquis du Pont and the Prince de Chambord. Colonel Thornton returned to England only when required by business and stayed only as long as necessary. In 1817, he applied for French citizenship, but obtained only an ordinance that allowed him to establish his domicile in France while securing the enjoyment of all civil rights as long as he resided in France.

Thornton made a will in Paris dated October 2nd, 1818, which was recorded April 26th, 1819. In the will he provided for his illegitimate daughter, Thornvilla Diana Rockingham Thornton, called Diana, who had been born after he retired to France. It also provides for any of her male and female heirs – or, in default, to his nephew, Andrew Barlow, his sister Mary and Samuel Barlow's son. His mistress, Priscilla Duins, Diana's mother, was provided a house in England or France and all the silver, china, linen, and other household effects along with an annual annuity of £500. Strangely only £100 was left to Thornton's lawful wife and his legitimate son, William Thomas, which would ultimately result in a lawsuit by his legitimate wife, Eliza.



A

CATALOGUE

OF THE

CELEBRATED COLLECTION

OF

Sporting Pictures,

THE PROPERTY OF

COLONEL THORNTON,

FROM

THORNVILLE ROYAL, SPY PARK, AND DULVERTON;

RECENTLY ORNAMENTING

KENYON HOUSE:

UNITING THE TALENTS OF

GILPIN, REINAGLE, BARRETT, AND STUBBS,
MORLAND, ELMER, &c. &c.

Which will be Sold by Auction,

BY

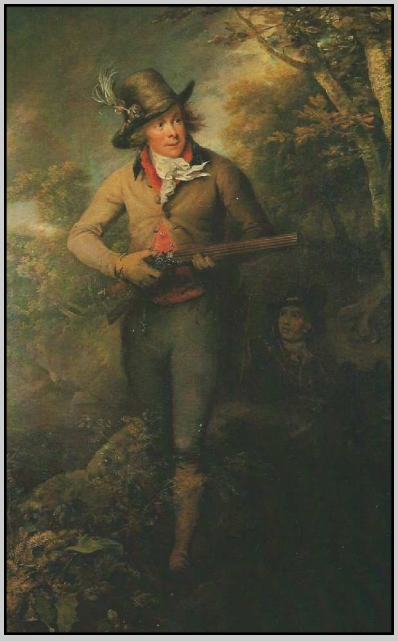
MR. HICKMAN,

AT HIS GALLERY, No. 29, ST. JAMES'S STREET,
On THURSDAY, the 11th of MAY, 1820,
AT ONE O'CLOCK, PRECISELY.

May be Viewed Three Days preceding the Sale, and Catalogues, at One Shilling each, had at the Gallery.

Hickman's Sale in 1820
Much of Colonel Thornton's most famous sporting art was sold.

Sawrey Gilpin ***The Death of The Fox*** 1788
Made famous due to its realism accurately depicting the animal's expressions rather than just portraits of the animals.
Sold at the Hickman's sale.



Colonel Thornton
Sawrey Gilpin & Philip Reinagle 1786
Roebuck Shooting in the forest of Glenmore

Colonel Thornton Portrait
Philip Reinagle ca. 1786
The Great Pike of Scotland
Alicia's race against Captain Flint.

Diana's actual birth date is unknown, but a letter from her son indicates the birth year was 1817. He states Diana was only six years old when Colonel Thornton died in 1823. Diana married Captain, later Admiral, Edward Wodehouse in 1838 having attained the legal age of 21 and therefore entitled to her inheritance as specified in Thornton's will. Admiral Wodehouse assumed the Thornton last name in deference to Diana and their only son and heir was known as Albert Thornton Wodehouse. There were also three daughters from this union.

Mounting debts and financial expenditures forced Colonel Thornton to place much of his famous art up for auction at Hickman's in London in 1820. He sold his estates in France and retired to lodgings in Paris, where he formed a Falconers' Club devoted to dining, wining, and singing hunting songs. Even though he was no longer a Master of Hounds, he always dressed in a traditional hunting-pink straight-cut coat. His toasts were to past memories of fox hunting, Old Conqueror, Old Orford, and finally to his favorite pastime, falconry. He ended the evening by leading the singing of old hunting songs, which would draw all of them back to the hunting they once enjoyed.

A premature death notice was published in the London newspapers in 1821, which Thornton thought quite humorous, and to which he responded with a list of his daily activities as a dead man.

On March 10th, 1823, when he was 72 years old, the world lost a sportsman the likes of which would never be seen again. It is said that he died after he ordered his men to bring out his hounds for a day's hunting and with his horse waiting at the door.

Controversy did not end with the Colonel's death, as his legal widow contested his will in both England and France on the basis of legitimacy. There must have been sufficient remaining funds to draw her into a legal battle to gain some financial support. His legal widow claimed that the Colonel was living in France and subject to the laws of France.

These laws did not allow a man to will away the whole of his property from his lawful widow and children. She was successful in her claims in the French courts. Ironically, the English courts upheld the Colonel's will in which he left his estate to his illegitimate daughter, Diana, while the French courts upheld the claims of his legitimate English wife. Ultimately, Diana inherited it all.

After Diana's death in 1884, her son, Albert, auctioned off many of the Colonel's sporting trophies. It was from this sale that the 1st Earl of Orford (third creation) purchased the silver gilt urn given to Colonel Thornton in 1781, over 100 years earlier. The urn was moved to Wolterton Hall, the home of the Earls of Orford, where it remained until 2000 at which time it was offered for sale by Sotheby's in New York.

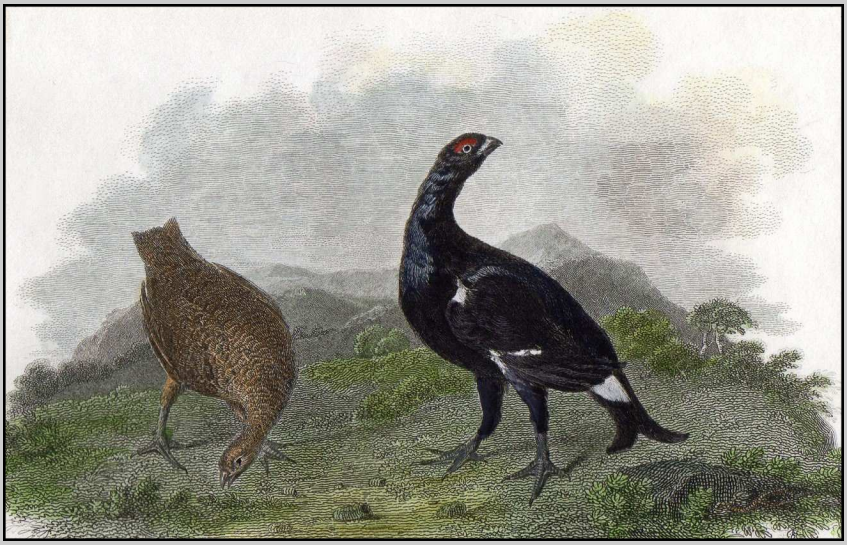
The Thornton Urn
Sotheby's sale 2000

Greenland Falcon
George Stubbs
Yale Center for British Art

Hugh McCausland states in his book *Old Sporting Characters:*

"A biographer of 1824, writing in the not over-delicate pages of *The Sporting Magazine* soon after the Colonel's death, was not alone in slating him as a mountebank, of whom 'no man who knew him ever spoke well.' A member of the Jockey Club is quoted as having dismissed him as follows: 'Never let me hear that fellow's name, we don't know him!' On the other hand, no less decidedly opposite an opinion appeared in *The Sporting Magazine's* next issue: 'Your readers all know that Colonel Thornton was a first rate sportsman both in the field and turf.' Pierce Egan, racy chronicler of all aspects of sport and author of Real *Life in London* and the *Book of Sports*, was another who used superlatives in the Colonel's praise. From these and other equally contradictory accounts the figure of Colonel Thornton emerges as one of the most spectacular personalities of old sporting history: a poseur and a braggart no doubt, and a genius at exaggeration, if not an accomplished liar, but certainly a character of great attainments, considerable popularity, and infinite entertainment."

The world would never again see another sportsman like Colonel Thornton.



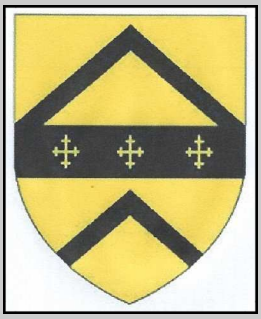
Stephen Elmer ***Black Grouse*** *Eng*. John Scott

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

George Walpole
The 3rd Earl of Orford

Sporting Companion of Colonel Thornton
in Falconry and Coursing

George Walpole, The 3rd Earl of Orford



The Earls of Orford
Family Crest

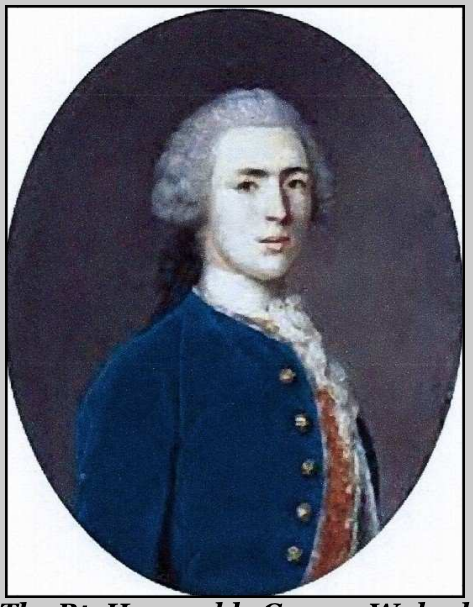
Colonel Thomas Thornton was a lifelong friend and sporting companion of George Walpole, the 3rd Earl of Orford. Their family names would forever be connected with the silver gilt urn that Colonel Thornton would receive in recognition of his nine years as manager of the Falconer's Club (1772-1781). Both the Thornton family crest and the Orford family crest are engraved on opposite sides of the urn clearly illustrating their closeness as sporting friends. The significance of the urn to falconry history necessitates the inclusion of a history of the Earls of Orford in any biography of Colonel Thornton. The families of the Earls of Orford would ultimately be responsible for the safekeeping of this historic falconry piece for the next 100 years.

Sir Robert Walpole
1st Earl of Orford.
Britain's 1st Prime Minister.

The first Earl of Orford was Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745) who served during the reigns of both King George I and King George II and who is regarded as the first Prime Minister of Great Britain. His contribution to Colonel Thornton's biography is that he built Houghton Hall in Norfolk and also amassed one of the world's most significant art collections. His son Robert the 2nd Earl of Orford (1701-1751) inherited Houghton Hall as well as the title. He married a 15 year-old heiress with whom he had one son and then soon separated. He nearly bankrupted the family fortune but at his death everything passed to his son George Walpole.

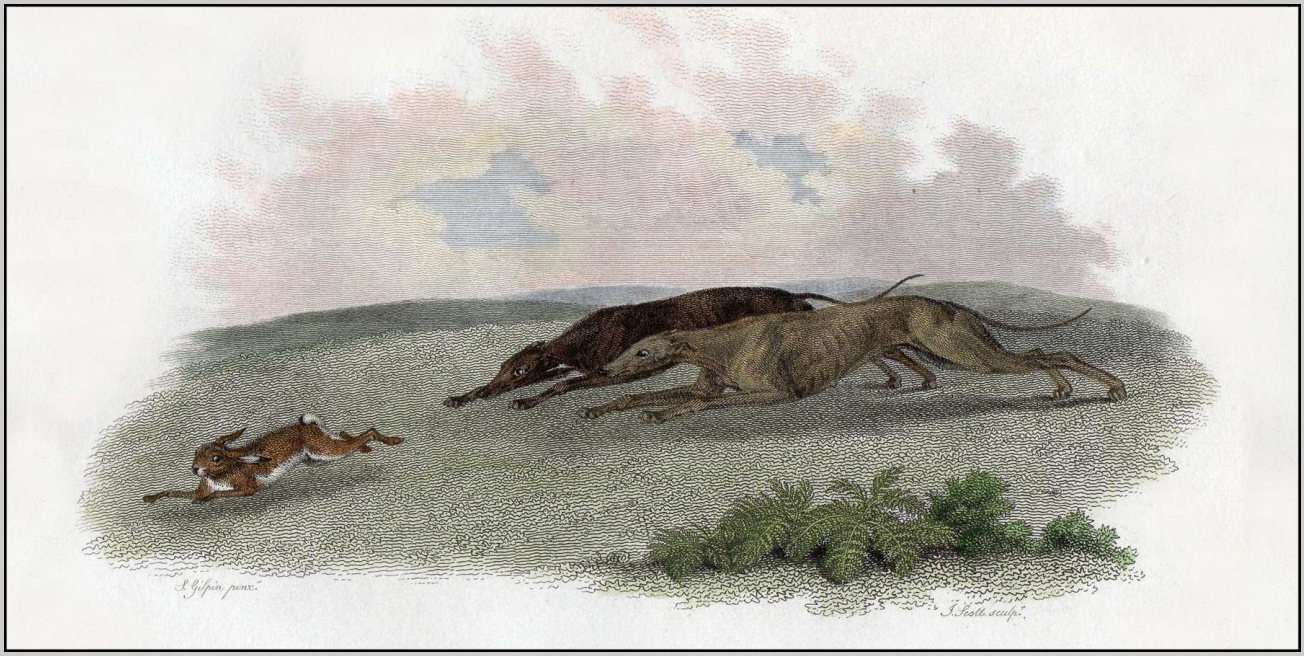
Houghton Hall
Built by Sir Robert Walpole.

George Walpole the 3rd Earl of Orford (1730-1791) would become close friends with Colonel Thomas Thornton and spend most of his life engaged in sporting activities. However to regain his family finances he sold 204 pieces of art from his grandfather's art collection to Catherine the Great of Russia in 1779 where it became the foundation for the collection at Russia's *State Hermitage Museum*. The sale of this collection caused the ire of many in the United Kingdom. Even today it is regarded as a national calamity.



The Rt. Honorable George Walpole
The 3rd Earl of Orford in 1754.

Although he was a great falconer, the Earl gained his greatest notoriety as a sportsman through his coursing activities. He founded the public Swaffam Coursing Club in 1776, which still exists today and it was in his breeding of greyhounds that he gained his fame. He was known to have fifty brace of greyhounds at any one time. Several are regarded as the foundation of today's modern greyhound. One famous bitch bred in 1778 was named Czarina after Catherine the Great. Czarina was undefeated in 47 matches and is regarded as the greyhound equivalent of the thoroughbred racehorse Eclipse. She did not produce a litter until age 13 at which time she produced some of the most famous greyhounds of the period. Her son Claret would sire Snowball, Major and Sylvia all of whom were never beaten. Snowball whose color was actually jet-black won 30 matches. In time the Earl became increasingly eccentric until his family restricted him to his home. It is told that upon hearing that his famous greyhound bitch

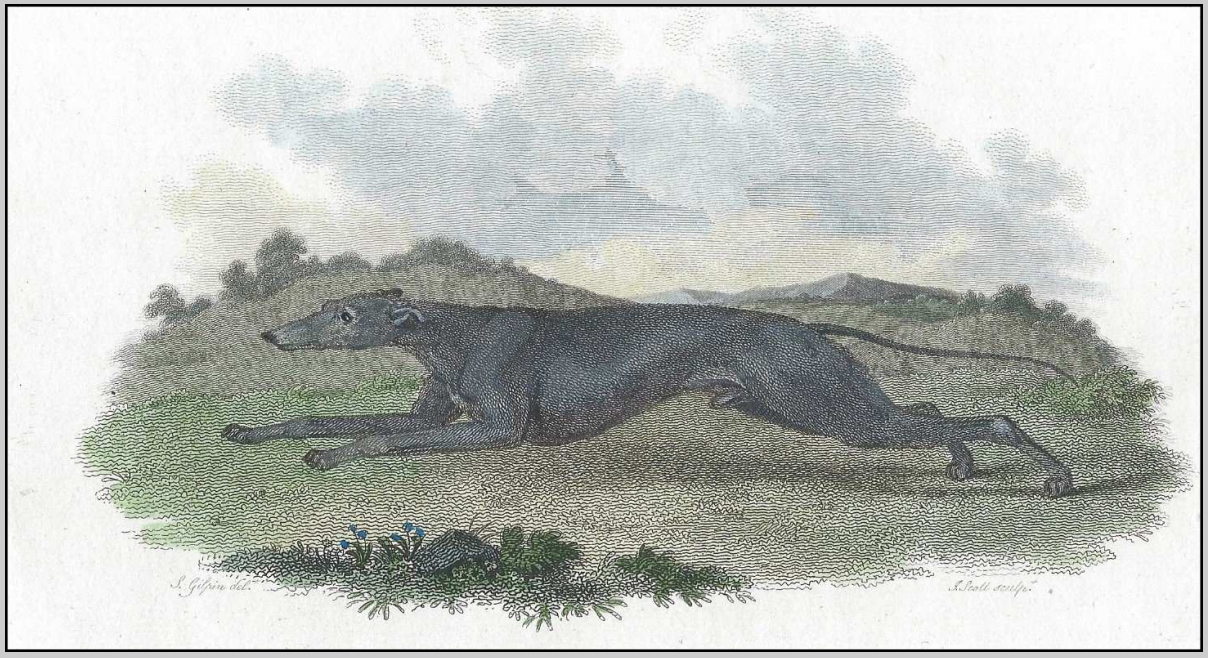


Sawrey Gilpin ***Czarina and Maria*** 1791
The two greyhounds that were racing when the Earl of Orford expired.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Czarina was running a match against Maria, Lord Orford escaped from his family prison, evaded his guardian, jumped onto his favorite piebald pony, and galloped off to attend the race. Spectators observed the Earl galloping across the heath with no coat or gloves. He watched Czarina run and win her trial. As Lord Orford raised his cap in salute he swayed in the saddle fell over backwards and died. However, in a collection of letters written by Lady Dorothy Nevill, a descendant of Lord Orford, there is a very different accounting in *The Reminiscences of Lady Dorothy Nevill* edited by her son Ralph Nevill in 1906: "*A great patron of the sport, he eventually met his death through taking a dive from a window. A coursing match was going on close by, and eager to see it, he seems to have been in too great a hurry to adopt the conventional method of going out by the door."*

After the death of Lord Orford in 1791, Colonel Thornton purchased many of the Earl's greyhounds and continued the bloodlines already established.

Since the 3rd Earl had died without issue, Houghton Hall reverted to his Uncle Horace who became the 4th Earl of Orford (1717-1797) and who was a celebrated man of letters and art historian. He was famous for his gothic house "Strawberry Hill" in Twickenham along with his Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto.* He would also die childless and the title (Earl of



Sawrey Gilpin ***Claret*** Eng. John Scott

His dam was Czarina and he was the sire of Snowball and Major.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Orford) died with him. As a result his sister Mary Walpole, who had married the 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley, inherited Houghton Hall which remains in the Cholmondeley family today.

The title of Earl of Orford ceased to exist in 1797 with the death of Horace Walpole. However the title of Baron Walpole was passed to a cousin Horatio who later revived the title of Earl of Orford nine years later in 1806 as the 1st Earl of Orford, 3rd creation. This line of Walpoles descended from the brother of Sir Robert Walpole and had their family estate at Wolterton, which was in close proximity to Houghton Hall now occupied by the Cholmondeley family.

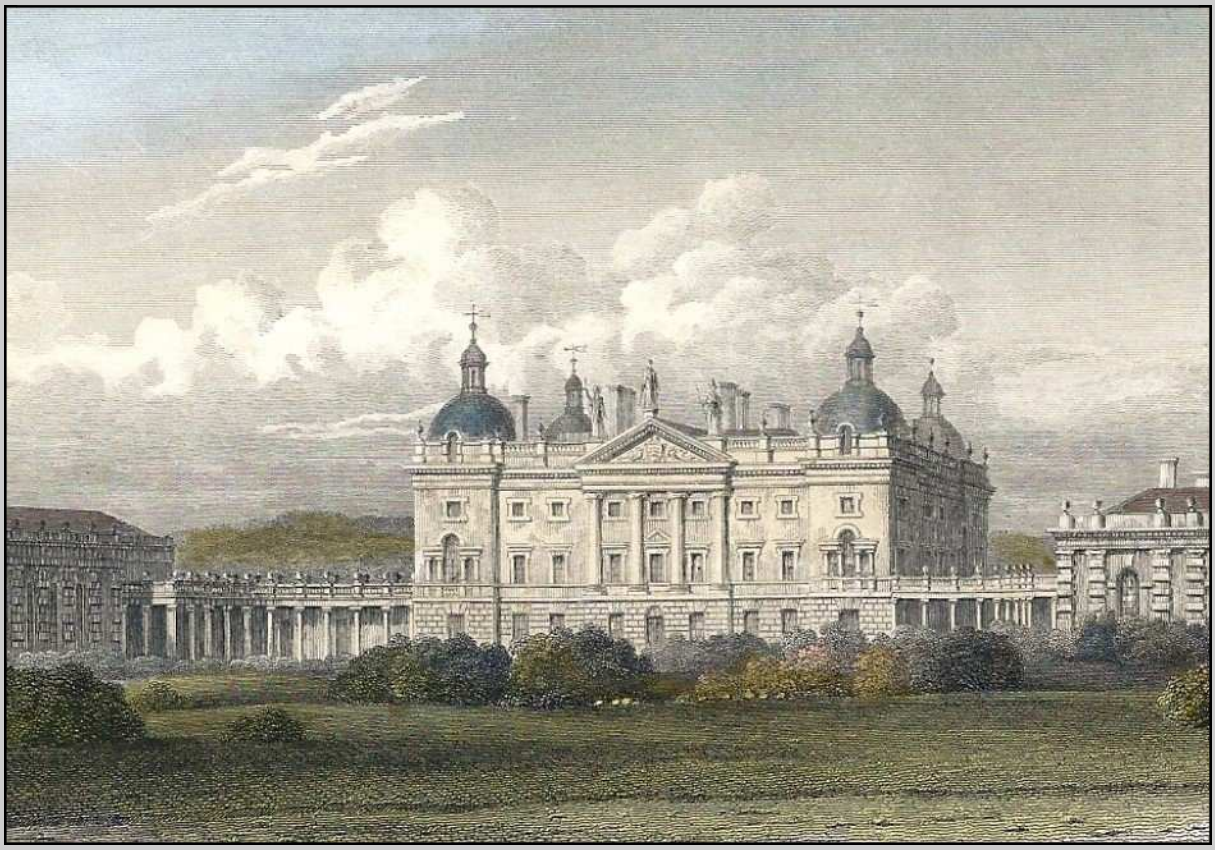
Both families still live on those respective estates today. The Earls of Orford would continue to live at Wolterton through two more generations when the 4th Earl of Orford (third creation) would reestablish the connection to Colonel Thornton with the purchase of the silver gilt urn at the sale of Colonel Thornton's sporting trophies in 1884.

Wolterton
Home of the Walpoles.
Picturesque Views of Seats of The Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland as presented by F. O. Morris

At the 1884 sale of the estate of Diana Thornton-Wodehouse (Colonel Thornton's illegitimate daughter), the 4th Earl of Orford purchased the famous silver gilt urn originally given to Colonel Thornton by the 3rd Earl of Orford in 1781 over 100 years earlier. The urn was sold by Albert Thornton-Wodehouse, Diana's son and heir as part of the collection of the Colonel's sporting trophies at Messrs, Christie, Manson and Woods on June 11th, 1884. Ironically each piece sold for its silver content rather than its historical value. The urn sold for £112 or 15.s per once for 132 oz. about $50,000 today. The urn remained at Wolterton until it was put up for auction by Sotheby's at an auction entitled *Important Silver, Russian works of Art and Objects of Vertu* in New York on October 24th, 2000. The established reserve was not reached so the urn was returned to an antique dealer in London. This dealer contacted the 7th Marquess of Cholmondeley of Houghton Hall to see if he was interested in acquiring it and he mentioned it to Tony Huston, an American Falconer who had married into the Cholmondeley family. After meeting with the dealer, Tony arranged to bring it to the United States. He contacted Robert Berry, an Archives of Falconry founder and patron who purchased the urn and then donated it to The Archives of Falconry in Boise, Idaho where it resides today.

The Colonel Thomas Thornton Exhibit Display at The Archives of Falconry
Also displayed are Thornton's personal copy of *A Sporting Tour of France* and a 1st edition of *A Sporting Tour through Northern England and the Highlands of Scotland*. A 16 gauge shotgun from Thornville Royal is also displayed, a gift from British falconer Tony James.

Houghton Hall-Home of George Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford



John Preston Neale ***Houghton Hall*** 1818

Picturesque Views of Seats of The Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland as presented by F. O. Morris

This magnificent estate of 1000 acres was built by Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first Prime Minister who served both King George I and King George II. The home is a key building in the history of Palladian architecture, which is derived from and inspired by the designs of Venetian architect Andrea Palladio. His work was based on Greek and Roman architecture, which was popular in England from the 17th through the 18th century. Houghton Hall was famous for its world-renowned art collection compiled by Sir Robert Walpole. Sir Robert Walpole's son, also named Robert, spent lavishly and put the family in to debt which resulted in his son George, the 3rd Earl of Orford selling the estate's art collection to Catherine the Great of Russia. She apparently paid about what the Walpoles had originally paid, nowhere near what they would be valued at today. The purchase price was a bargain for the paintings now located in the State Hermitage Museum in the former Royal palace in St. Petersburg, Russia. A special exhibition was arranged in 2013 for a loan of a number of the original paintings sold from Houghton Hall and to place them in their historical location within the house. Houghton Hall in Norfolk would have seen Colonel Thornton attending the sporting activities hosted by his friend and fellow falconer George Walpole, the 3rd Earl of Orford.

Houghton Hall Today

Home of the 3rd Earl of Orford-Colonel Thornton's Sporting Companion

Most of the homes and estates that were associated with Colonel Thornton and his sporting activities are long gone. The ravages of time and lost fortunes have taken their toll and many were torn down or repurposed for another activity. Fortunately there is a magnificent exception, Houghton Hall. The original home of the Walpoles and the Earls of Orford has not only survived but flourished. It has been under the stewardship of the Marquess of Cholmondeley family who have held ownership since the 4th Earl of Orford died without children and it passed to them. They have owned it from the 3rd Marquess of Cholmondeley until the present owner Lord David Cholmondeley. The 1000 acre estate is adjacent to Sandringham House, one of the private homes actually owned by the British Royal family.

Houghton Hall's Art Collection Returns for an Exhibition in 2013

Lord Cholmondeley was able to arrange an exhibition for much of the original art work sold by the 3rd Earl of Orford in 1779. The Exhibition Hall was completely restored to its original state and the art was placed in its original locations. The event was done in cooperation with the Hermitage. Once again the viewer, like Colonel Thornton, was able to view the art collection and Houghton Hall as it looked over 200 earlier.

Houghton Hall Today

Aerial View

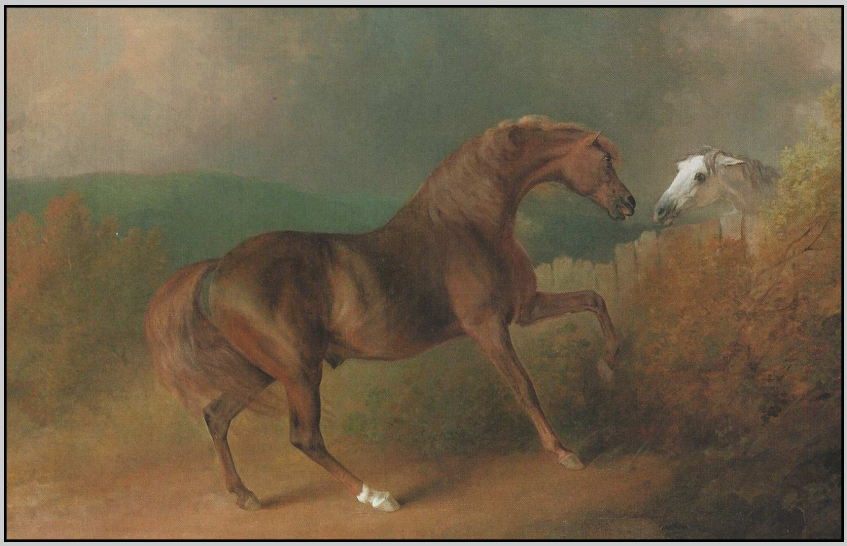
A Greyhound Once Again on the Grounds

The Red Salon

Fallow Deer on the Grounds

The Stone Hall

The Great Staircase



Sawrey Gilpin ***Jupiter-Stallion*** Eng. John Scott

The Sportsman's Repository-1820

Alicia Massingham
aka Mrs. "T", Mrs. Thornton, Alicia Meynell

The Young Mistress of Colonel Thornton
Who Became the First Woman Ever to
Best a Man In a Sporting Event

Alicia Massingham or Meynell

The Sporting Magazine Vol. 25, January 1805

Alicia Massingham or Meynell, Mrs. Thornton or Mrs. T. as she is often referenced is perhaps as well known as Colonel Thornton, but was only involved in 8 years of the Colonel's 50 years of sporting activity. It was a horse race between Alicia and a neighbor, Captain Flint that would catch all of England's attention and generate as much written coverage as the Colonel would over his entire life. The Colonel appears to have been an active promoter of the horse race perhaps in the hopes of basking in the light Alicia was receiving. He does not appear to have been a gambler but he did seem to relish betting on his own athletic feats, and now Alicia's. Numerous descriptions of the event have been written so it is appropriate that one of these recollections be included. This poetic description of the horse race was written by Pierce Egan as part of his *Book of Sports and Mirror of Life in 1832* and portrays the race from a perspective of the time and it is the most eloquent.

The Gallant and Spirited Race, at Knavesmire, in Yorkshire

See the Course throng'd with gazers and lots of "*Old Rakes"*-
To view the beautiful Heroine' start for the stakes,
With handkerchiefs waving, the spectators all clap,
Half dressed like a jockey, with her whip and her cap,
With spirits like fire, behold her mount the gay *prad.*
And the cheers and the smiles make her heart light and glad;
And Mrs. Thornton's 'the favorite' through thick and through thin,
And the Swells and the *Jockeys* all bet that she'll win!

English School ***York Meeting*** 1804

The Celebrated Race between Mr. Thornton's *Vingarillo* and Mr. Flint's *Thornville*, August 25th, 1804

On Saturday, August 25, the above match was decided in the presence of upwards of 100,000 persons. Indeed, expectation was raised to the highest pitch from the novelty of the match: thousands from every part of the surrounding country thronged to the ground. In order to keep the course as clear as possible, several additional persons were employed; and, much to the credit of the 6th Light Dragoons, a party of them also were on the ground on horseback for the like purpose, and which, unquestionably, saved the lives of many persons. About four o'clock, Mrs. Thornton appeared on the ground in high spirits, *Old Vingarillo* led by Colonel Thornton, followed by Mr. Baker and Mr. H. Bayntun, and soon afterwards Mr. Flint. Every thing being in readiness, Mrs. Thornton started amidst the loudest cheers ever heard upon a race course; and the betting all over the ground created a great deal of mirth and witty remarks from the spectators. She mounted her horse in the true spirit of a cavalier; and there was a great deal of the gallant-bearing attached to the character of it; the most experienced jockey could not have been more at his ease, or have acted his part in better style than Mrs. Thornton.

(Pierce Egan resumes his poetic description on the next page)

When first I strove to win the prize,
I felt my youthful spirits rise,-
Hope's crimson Hush illum'd my face,
And all my soul was in the race;
When dress'd and mounted 'twas my pride,
Before the starting-post to ride;
My rival dress'd in pearly white,
The crowded Course to me delight.

In stands around fair ladies swarm,
And mark with smiles my slender form;
Their lovely looks new ardour raise,
For beauty's smile is merit's praise.
The flag is dropp'd-the sign to start,
Away more fleet than winds we dart;
And though the odds against me lay.
The Petticoat shall win the day.

Though now no more we seek the race,
I trust the Jockey keeps his place:
For still to win the prize I feel
An equal wish, an equal zeal;
And still can friendship's smile impart
Delightful tremors through this heart;
Indeed, I feel it flutter now-
Yes, while I look, and while I bow.

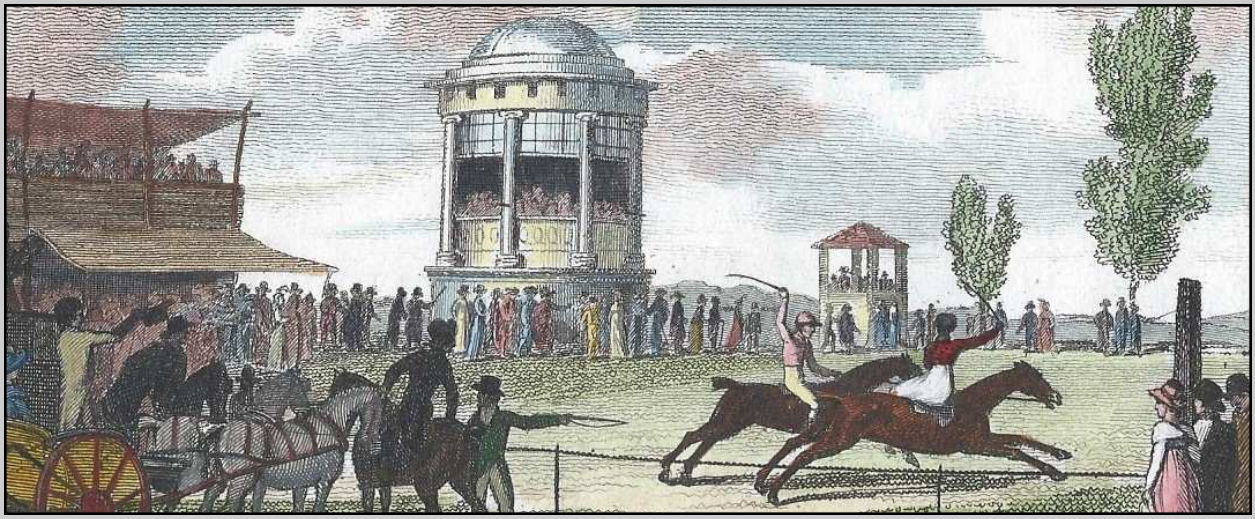
My tender years must vouch my truth,
For Candour ever dwells with youth;
Then sure the Sage might well believe
A face like mine could ne'er deceive;
If here you e'er a match should make,
My life upon my luck I'll stake:
And, 'gainst all odds, I think you'll say,
The Petticoat shall win the day.

Alicia vs Captain Flint August 25th, 1804
Pierce Egan's *Book of Sports* - 1832

Old Vingarillo, the horse, also seemed proud of the 'fair charge' entrusted to his care. The ladies, in general, were interested in the success of one of their own sex, except a few old maids, who appeared rather *squeamish* on the subject, and who observed one to another, behind their fans, that it was a very *bold* undertaking for a female to contest a race upon a public race course; and that the Colonel, out of respect to propriety, ought to have prevented such an exhibition taking place. "Yes ladies," observed an old sporting gentleman, "but you are aware, sometimes, that the grey mare is the better horse." It is impossible to describe the intense interest which this match excited during the race; and the shouts of the "Petticoat for Ever," resounded from one end of the course to the other. On starting, it was 5 and 6 to 4 on the Petticoat; and, in running the first three miles, 7 to 4 and 2 to 1 on Mrs. Thornton's winning; indeed, success seemed to be so certain on her part, that the oldest sportsman in the stand betted in her favor. In running the last mile she lost ground, in consequence of her saddle-girths having slackened, and the saddle turning round. Her opponent, taking advantage of this circumstance, pushed forward, and passed her; the lady after using every exertion:

Push on, my dear lady—pray don't the whip stint,
To beat such as you, must have the *heart* of a Flint!"

But, finding it impossible to win, she pulled up at two distances from home, when Mr. Flint won the match.



Celebrated Race Between Mrs. Thornton and Mr Flint, at the York, August Meeting 1804
The Sporting Magazine Vol 24, 1804.

It was difficult to say, whether her *horsemanship,* her dress, or her beauty, were most admired, the *tout ensemble* was unique. Never, surely, did a woman ride in better style. The race was run in *nine minutes* and *fifty-nine* seconds. The dress of Mrs., Thornton was a leopard-coloured body with blue sleeves, the vest buff, and blue cap. Mr. Flint rode in white. Thus ended the most interesting race ever run upon Knavesmire. The following *jeu d'esprit* was handed about on the occasion:

"The *beau monde* will condemn what I write, beyond doubt,
And some simpering young misses will giggle and pout;
But the odds that I bet shall be Twenty to *one,*
That such an exploit ne'er by Woman was done."

Not at all dispirited by defeat, Mrs. Thornton publicly challenged her antagonist to ride the same match in the following year, his horse *Thornville* against any one of three she would bring, and he might select, and which should be hunted by her through the season. The challenge, however, was refused by Mr. Flint. No words can express the disappointment felt at the defeat of Mrs. Thornton. The spirit she displayed, and the good humour with which she had borne her loss, greatly diminished the joy of many of the winners. From the very superior style in which she performed her exercising gallop of four miles on the preceding Wednesday, betting was greatly in her favor; her saddle turning round was not attended with the slightest injury to her person, nor did it in the least damp her courage, while her *horsemanship* and *close-seated* riding astonished the beholders, and inspired a general confidence in her success. Not less than £200,000 were pending on this extraordinary match, perhaps more, if we include the bets in every part of the country: and there is no part, we believe, in which there were not some. It is but common justice to observe, that if the lady had been better mounted she could not, possibly, have failed of success. Indeed, she laboured under every possible disadvantage; notwithstanding which, and the *ungallant* conduct of Mr. Flint, she flew along the course with an astonishing swiftness,

MRS. THORNTON'S COMMEMORATIVE RACING CUP

The cup bowl engraved on one side with a seated waist-high portrait of a lady jockey inscribed "Mrs. Thornton in her Jockey Dress", the reverse with a detailed view of a race-course before the Stands, inscribed below "Mrs. Thornton 's Race at York, August, 1804."

Sotheby's: The Racing Sale, November 13th, 1996 Lot 290

conscious of her own superior skill, and would, ultimately, have out-stripped her adversary, but for the accident which took place."

Pierce Egan writing under the nom de plume "Amateur Sportsman" in his *Sporting Anecdotes, Original and Select* of 1807 provides additional banter between Alicia and Mr. Flint.

"Still confident of success in the event of another trial, the following humorous article was inserted by the lady in the York Herald:
Having read in your paper, that Mr. Flint paid me every attention that could be shown on the occasion of the race, I request you will submit the following Elements of Politeness to the gentlemen of the turf, for them to sanction or reject, upon any future match of this kind taking place.
-Element 1.--Mr. Baker, who kindly offered to ride round with me, on account of the dangerous accident I met with on the Wednesday before, from my saddle turning round, was *positively* and *peremptorily* refused this permission.
-Element 2. --At the starting post, the most distant species of common courtesy was studiously avoided; and I received a sort of word of command from Mr. Flint, as thus-

"Keep that side, Ma'am!"

For a morning's ride, this might be *complimentary*; but it was here depriving me of the *whip-hand*. I did not expect Mr. Flint to shake hands with me, that I understand being the common prelude to boxing.
-Element 3.--When my horse broke down in the terrible way he did, all the course must have witnessed the very handsome manner in which Mr. Flint brought me in, i.e. *left me out*, by distancing me as much as he possibly could.
If these should be received as precedents, the art of riding against ladies will be made most completely easy."

Alicia continues and issues a challenge to Mr. Flint for another race:

"Challenge. — After all this, I challenge Mr. Flint to ride the same match, in all its terms, over the same course next year — his horse, Brown Thornville, against any one he may choose to select out of three horses I shall hunt this season."

The following reply (written by some poetic wag for the gentleman) appeared in the public prints, with the introduction of which we shall conclude this interesting article.

"Flint, *Respondent*— Thornton, *Appellant*,

My *Pegasus* dull, has the honour and pride
To acknowledge your *elements* bright:
And first, though you hint that I took the *wrong side*,
The *end of the race* prov'd it *right*.

In *courtesy*, next, you are pleas'd to suggest,
That I was deficient on *starting*;
But to *give you the lead* was clearly a test,
How *civil* I was at the *parting*.

I denied you a *friend to ride* by, I confess,
And for why? -not for the sake of the *pelf:*
But I wish'd to enjoy, in a case of such bliss,
All that pleasure and honour *myself*.

Four-fifths of the race, you must candidly own,
You had the "*whip hand*," while behind
I humbly pursued, till your nag "was broke down"-—
Then *before you to go* sure was *kind*!

But believe to the Fair I am warmly inclin'd—
To be always *polite* I am ready;
Tho' my *Horse* was so *rude* as to leave you *behind,*
I will ne'er *run away* from a Lady.

To your challenge anew, I beg to reply—
When your Ladyship's made ev'ry bet,
I'll be proud to attend, the contest to try,
For the honour again of your *wit.*"

Alicia would not get the chance to race Captain Flint again but one year later she got her chance at redemption by racing the leading jockey of the day Frank Buckle.

Frank Buckle

Benjamin Marshall ***The Jockey Frank Buckle*** 1802
the Owner-Breeder John Wastell, his Trainer Robert Robson, and a Stable-lad

Francis "Frank" Buckle (1766-1832), known to the British horse racing public as "The Governor" was an English jockey, who has been described as "the jockey non-pareil" of the opening quarter of the 19th century, and the man who "brought respectability to race-riding." He won at least 27 British Classic Races during his career, a record that would not be beaten for over 150 years. His first win in one of the English Classics came in 1792, riding Lord Grosvenor's colt John Bull. Grosvenor would provide Buckle with three more Classic winners.

After Grosvenor's death, Buckle formed a profitable partnership with the leading trainer of the time, Robert Robson and would win another eleven Classic races. One of his most famous victories came at the 1799 Craven meeting at Newmarket. Buckle on Hambletonian met Diamond ridden by Dennis Fitzpatrick, in a 4 mile 1 1/2 furlong match race with Hambletonian winning. His last ride was on Conservator at Newmarket on 6 November 1831. Only months after retiring from the saddle he died on 5 February 1832. Source: Wikipedia.

Image: Yale Center for British Art

Alicia vs Frank Buckle August 24th, 1805

Alicia would have her revenge the next year at the same races. Captain Flint refused to ride against her so she scheduled another race with a friend Mr. Bromford only to have that rider forfeit the race so she collected £2,000 along with four hogsheads of French wine. Another race that same day was arranged with the leading jockey of the day, Frank Buckle. This was a match between Colonel Thornton's Louisa, by Pegasus, out of Nelly, ridden by Mrs. Thornton, carrying 9st. 61b., and Mr. Bromford's Allegro, sister to Allegranti, ridden by Buckle, 13st. 61b., two miles for a bet of 500 guineas. Alicia took the early lead in the two-mile race but Buckle soon regained the lead. Alicia eventually pulled ahead and won the race becoming the first woman to ever best a man in a match race. Perhaps Alicia herself provides the best description of the race as published in *The Sporting Magazine* Vol. 26, Sept., 1805.

Jockey Frank Buckle
© Trustees of the British Museum

Frank Buckle on Hambletonian
against Diamond in a famous four mile match race in 1799

The YORK MATCH. A NEW JOCKEY SONG.
(Written by Mrs. Thornton,)

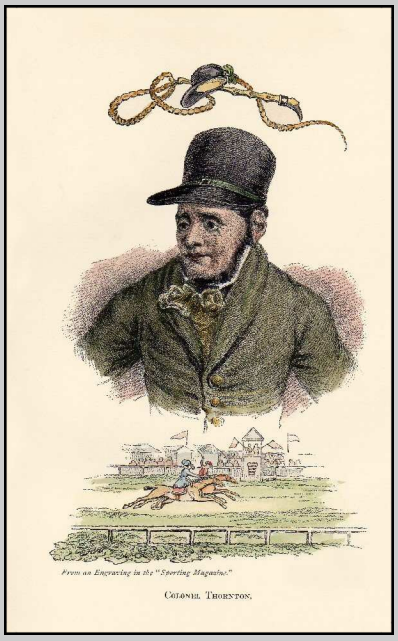
To the post we advanc'd, at the signal to start,
Brisk I flourish'd my whip over Louisa's ears;
When springing amain, by a resolute dart,
I gain'd a whole length of the jockey of peers;
That advantage to keep, as I rode fleet along,
Behind me full many a glance did I throw -
I soon found I'd the foot, but Allegro was strong.
And the jockey of peers carried weight, as you know.

I tried then to cut the third post pretty close,
At the same time, the length I had gain'd to preserve.
Gave whip to my mare; but she kick'd at the dose,
And - a vile little devil - attempted to swerve;
I chang'd, and a left handed cut brought her to,
But Buckle 'tween me and the post made a push,
And lay neck and neck with me, all I could do.
Not seeming to value my efforts a rush.

I led him, however, at length to a slough,
Where he sunk to the fetlock at every stroke,
My Buck had the bone-he press'd hard at me now,
Add seem'd to enjoy much the best of the joke.
But I crossed at the next post, and stretching my hand-

Alicia vs Frank Buckle August 24th, 1805

Frank Buckle
Winner of 27 British Classic Races
a record not equaled for 150 years.



Colonel Thornton in Jockey Dress
Alicia's Race with Captain Flint
portrayed below portrait.

As I hope to be sav'd, without malice or heat —
I put all his trials of skill to the stand.
For the jockey Buck I nearly threw from his seat.

He recover'd his saddle, by seizing the mane.
My mare darted forward, as swift as the wind.
Nor heard I of the horse or of Buckle again.
Till I turn'd, and beheld them come panting behind;
My pleasure alone, that sensation defines,
Which the Laplander courts from the breeze of the south,
When I saw my Buck distanced, and dash'd up the lines
With my mare hard in band, and my whip in my mouth.

Alicia's victory celebration was short lived as the Colonel had moved to the grandstands to watch the race only to be confronted by Captain Flint over the bet that the Colonel had not paid as part of the previous year's race with him. Captain Flint proceeded to thrash him with a horsewhip and the Colonel had to be saved by other race goers. Arrests and lawsuits followed but the Colonel would eventually be vindicated.

In just two short months after Alicia's crowning victory, Colonel Thornton would place many of his horses for sale. His personal finances had declined so much that he sold Thornville Royal to Lord Stourton for £226,000 with a vacating date in January 1806. He held his annual Christmas and New Years festivities for the neighbors and then he moved his sporting activities to Falconer's Hall in Baythorpe. Alicia's time with the Colonel came to an end and she turned vindictive even reviling the Colonel in the newspapers. In just a few months she would marry a naval officer who had recently come into a fortune. Alicia Massingham is never heard from again but her winning horse race against a man established her as the Billie Jean King of her generation by becoming the first woman to best a man in a match race.

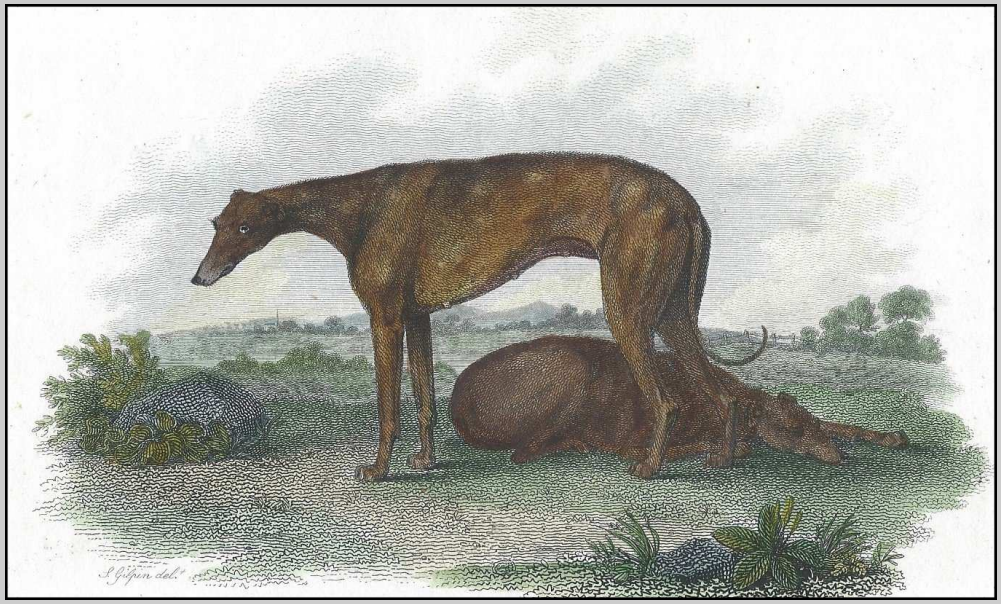
J. N. Sartorius ***A Gentleman Coursing*** 1824

Coursing with Greyhounds

A Favorite Sporting Activity at Falconer's Hall
Near His Coursing Friends Major Topham and
George Walpole, The 3rd Earl of Orford

Coursing with Greyhounds

Coursing at Swaffam
The Sporting Magazine, 1792
Lord Orford founded the first public coursing club at Swaffam in 1776.



Sawrey Gilpin ***Venus*** Eng. John. Scott
Daughter of Major Topham's Snowball.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Coursing with Greyhounds

Henry Bernard Chalon ***Major Topham and Snowball***

Considered one of the best greyhounds to ever course in England whose sire was Claret. He won 4 Cups, the equivalent of the Waterloo Cup, an accomplishment never achieved again.

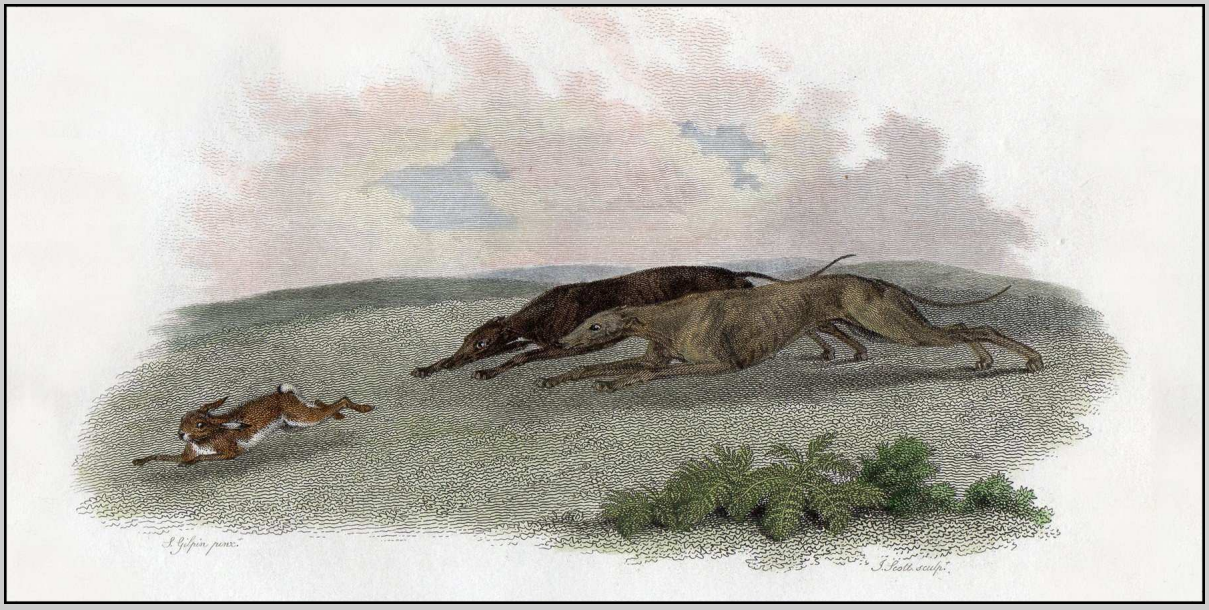
Philip Reinagle ***Major*** Eng. John Scott

A littermate to Snowball presented to Colonel Thornton by Major Topham and likely named for him. Snowball won four Cups and over thirty races but could not best his own brother Major. Major was the favorite of Colonel Thornton and is depicted with him on the dust jacket of this work.

The Sportsman's Repository -1820

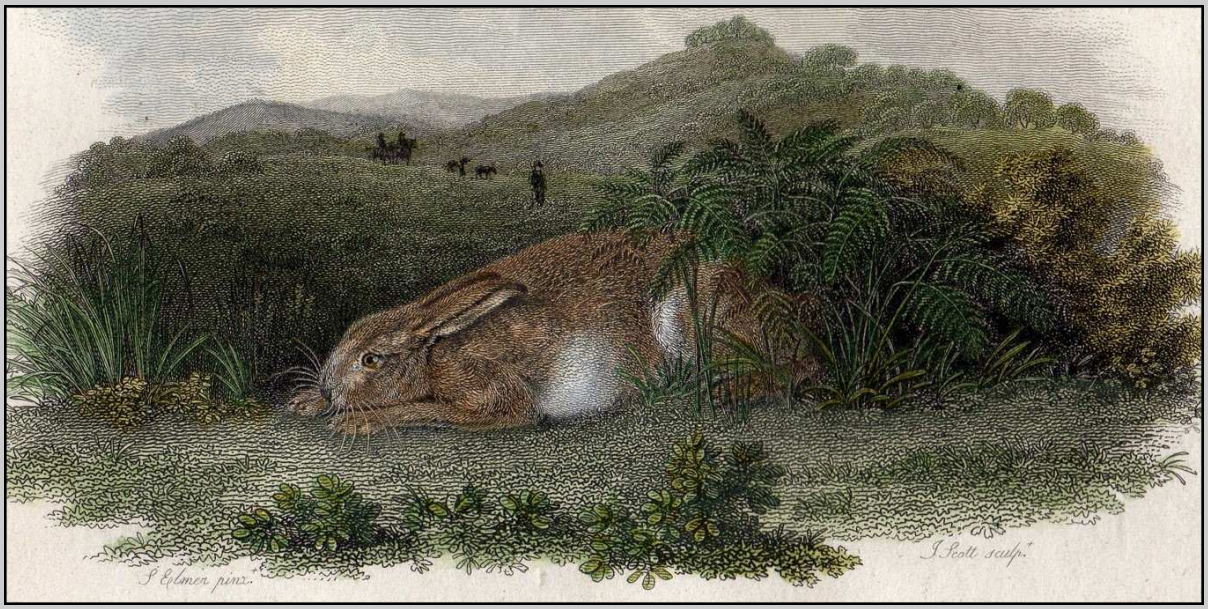
Coursing with Greyhounds

Philip Reinagle ***Colonel Thornton's Two Celebrated Greyhounds***
The original painting likely depicts Czarina and Maria.



Sawrey Gilpin ***Czarina and Maria*** Eng. John Scott
The famous greyhound race in 1791 to which Lord Orford rushed to see and fell off his horse and died.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Coursing with Greyhounds



Stephen Elmer — ***Hare Sitting*** — Eng. John Scott

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Philip Reinagle — ***Two Greyhounds with a Hare*** — 1792

N. Drake ***The Earth Stopper*** Eng. John Scott

He precedes each fox hunt the evening before enclosing (stopping) fox dens and potential hiding places in order to keep the fox running.

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

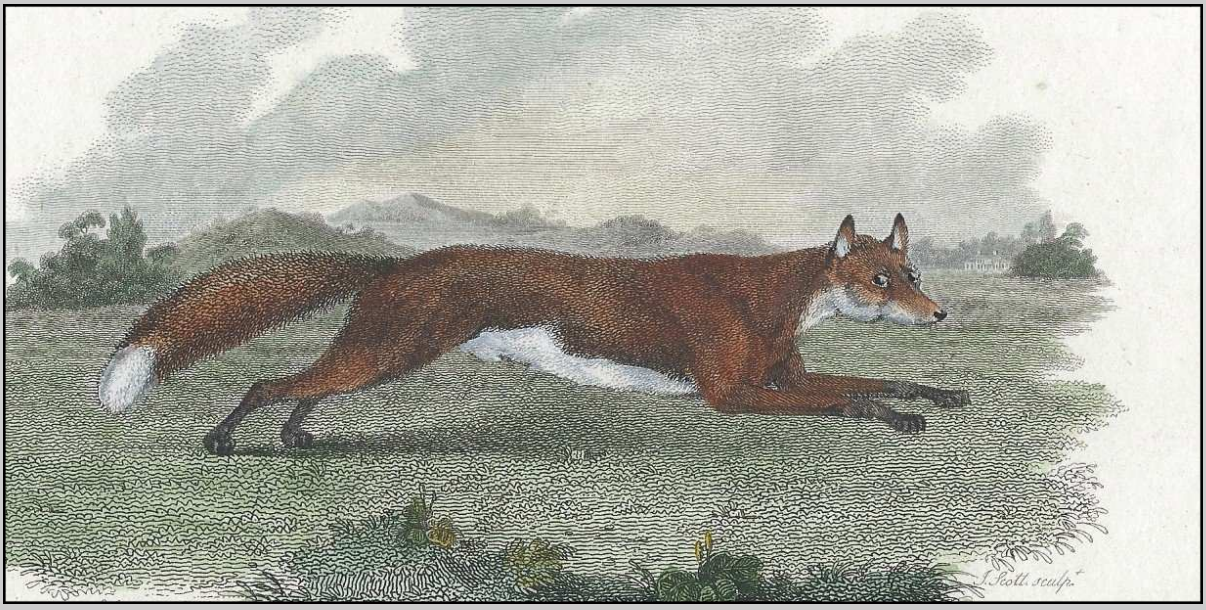
Fox Hunting

One of Colonel Thornton's Earliest and Favorite Sporting Activities for Which He Became The Master of Hounds

Fox Hunting

Philip Reinagle — ***Harrier*** — Eng. John Scott

The Sportsman's Repository -1820



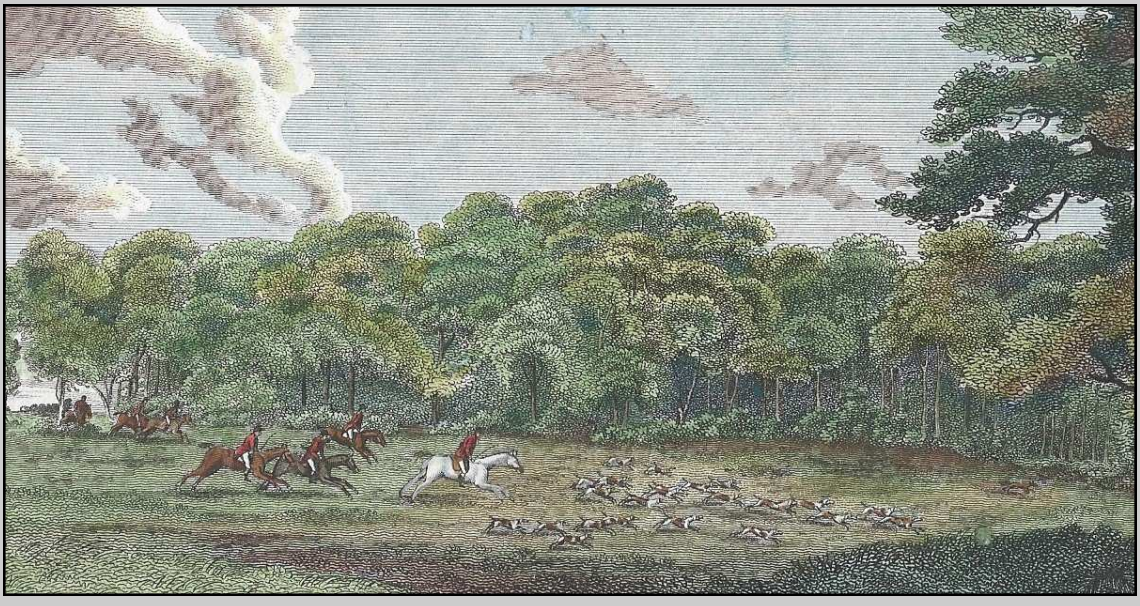
Sawrey Gilpin — ***Reynard The Fox*** — Eng. John Scott

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Fox Hunting

Sawrey Gilpin ***John Parkhurst*** 1785

"Handsome Jack" Parkhurst was a close friend and companion of Colonel Thornton. He joined Colonel Thornton in many of his wild exploits. He along with his sons enjoyed every vice and soon exhausted the family fortune.



Colonel Thornton Fox Hunting At Thornville 1806

An engraving entitled *View at Thornville Park* from *The Sporting Magazine* in 1806.

Fox Hunting

Sawrey Gilpin ***The Death of The Fox*** 1793

Commissioned by Colonel Thornton to commemorate a victory wager successfully pursuing a fox over 23 miles. It is considered Gilpin's finest work as it accurately depicts the ferocity of the hunt. Painted life size, it measures 12 feet by eight feet.

Philip Reinagle ***Breaking Cover*** ca 1793

Commissioned as a companion piece to *The Death of the Fox* shown above. Colonel Thornton is depicted with his hounds as the fox has just broken from cover into the open country.

Colonel Thornton by John Russell

John Russell and Philip Reinagle — ***Colonel Thomas Thornton*** — 1791

Records indicate that John Russell, a well known portrait painter did the portrait and Philip Reinagle the falcon.

Colonel Thomas Thornton of Thornville Royal and the West York Militia

Hawking

Philip Reinagle ***Colonel Thornton with Falcon*** *1784*

This portrait was discovered among the collections of Castle Howard in Yorkshire. Colonel Thornton's older sister Mary had married Captain Francis Samuel Barlow and this portrait of the Colonel and his mother Mary came to the Castle Howard Collection and the 9th Earl of Carlisle from their related Barlow family in 1853.

From the Castle Howard Collection

Hawking

Colonel Thornton's True Passion
for Over 60 Years

Hawking

Sawrey Gilpin ***Heron Hawking*** 1780

"This represents a true scene which happened a few miles from York. The Falconer, Colonel Thornton, who is shown taking up his hawk from a heron which it has killed, left his horse outside the pailing, when the animal immediately leapt over, followed his master and stood her in the attitude here represented."

Sold at Sotheby's November 22, 2007-Lot 48

Hawking

Sawrey Gilpin ***Hawking*** Eng. Thomas Morris

" To the Noble and Gentleman of the Falconer's Club, this plate is humbley inscribed by their most obedient and devoted servant, T. Morris, 1780."

© Trustees of the British Museum

Hawking

J. Howe ***Hawking*** Eng. C. Turner

Inscription; "To Sir John Maxwell of Pollack, Bart. This plate taken from a picture in the possession of Mr. Fleming of Barochan is most respectfully dedicated by his most obliged and humble servants R & J. Findlay."

"He [Fleming Family member} is here represented on horseback, carrying a hooded falcon, and followed by a favourite black poodle. At his horse's head stands John Anderson, a celebrated Scottish falconer, with two hawks on his glove, one hooded, the other pulling at a partridge apparently just killed. At Anderson's side, between him and his master's horse, stands a famous pointer; while before him, in characteristic attitudes, are four spaniels, which were always used for woodcock hawking. To the right an assistant falconer, George Harvey, seated on a felled tree, carries on his glove a cast of spare hawks." J. E Harting- *Bibliotheca Accipitraria*. Colonel Thornton visited the Flemings when he made his tours to Scotland.

Hawking

Isaac Cruikshank

Mr. John Anderson
Falconer at Barochan, Renfrewshire

As he appeared at the Coronation of his Majesty George the 4th, July 19th, 1821

"On Mr. Fleming's death in 1819 he was engaged by the Earl of Morton at Dalmahoy, and on the occasion of the coronation of George IV. In 1820 he was selected on behalf of the Duke of Athole to present the King with a cast of hawks, that being the feudal tenure by which the Dukes of Athole held the Isle of Man from the Crown."

J. E. Harting's *Bibliotheca Accipitraria*

Hawking, A Ballad

MADE AT FALCONER'S HALL, YORKSHIRE (In 1803)
[Thunder and Lightning are two falcons-Beckers is a Falconer]

Come Sportsmen away — the morning bow fair!
To the wolds, to the wolds, let us quickly repair:
Bold Thunder and Lightning are made for the game.
And Death and the Devil are both just the same.

See, Beckers, a Kite — a mere speck in the sky—
Zounds! out with the owl — lo! he catches his eye—
Down he comes with a sweep — be unhooded each hawk
Very soon will they both to the gentleman stalk.

They're at him — he's off— now they're o'er him again;
Ah! — that was a stroke — see ! he drops to the plain—
They rake him — they tear him — he flutters, he cries,
He struggles, he turns up his talons, and dies.

See, a Magpie! Let fly — how he flutters and shambles,
How he chatters, poor rogue! Now he darts to the brambles—
Out again — overtaken — his spirits no flag —
Flip! He gives up the ghost — good night, Mister Mag.

Lo a Heron! let loose — how he pokes his long neck,
And darts, with what vengeance, but vainly, his beak!
'Egad, he shifts well — now he feels a death-wound,
And with Thunder and Lightning rolls tumbling to ground,

Thus we Falconers sport — now homewards we stray,
To fight o'er the bottle the wars of the day:
Sink sweetly to rest, with a Dove in our arms.

The Sporting Magazine-Volume 23, 1804

Colonel Thornton Hawking

George Edward Lodge ***Pero Coming On Her By Accident Made Her Carry*** 1896

A Sporting Tour Through the Northern Parts of England-1896

George Lodge a leading falconry artist who lived after Colonel Thornton, was retained to illustrate the 1896 reprinting of Colonel Thornton's work of 1804. This is George Edward Lodge's interpretation of an event that occurred on the Sporting Tour. A beautiful example of chromolithography.

© George Edward Lodge Trust

George Edward Lodge ***Falcon and Ptarmigan*** 1896

A Sporting Tour Through the Northern Parts of England-1896.

© George Edward Lodge Trust

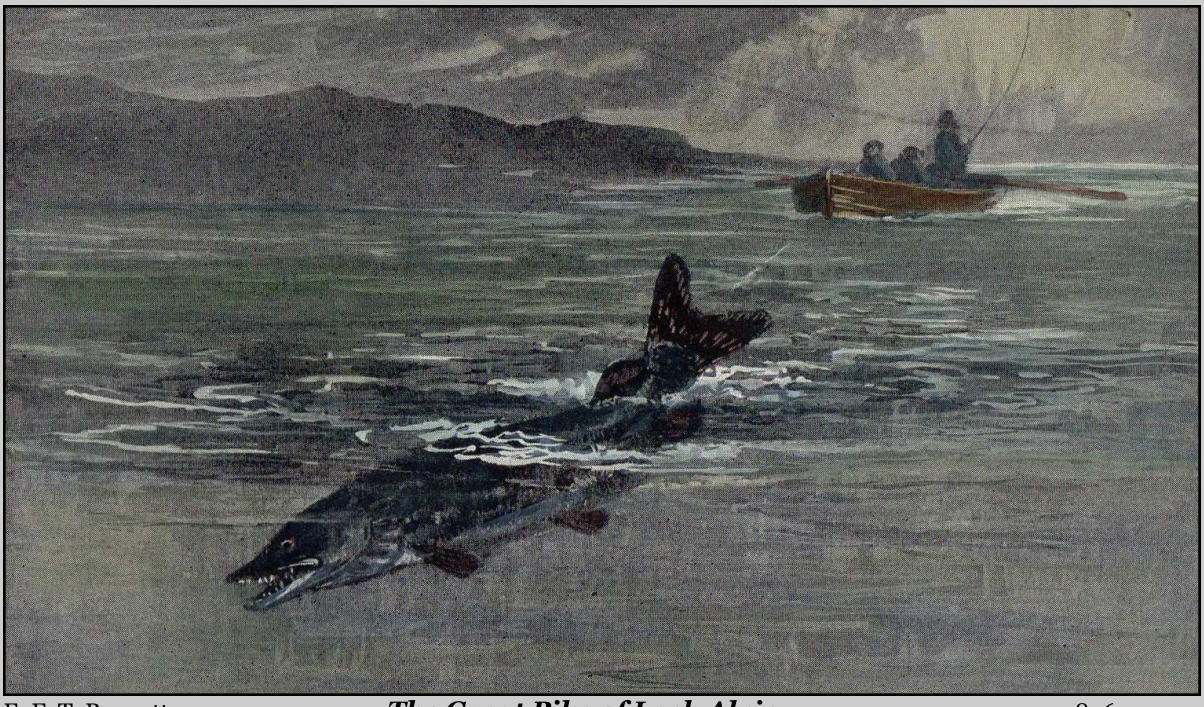
Angling

Colonel Thornton Establishes Angling Records
During his Scottish Tours

George Barret ***Colonel Thornton and Friends at Lake Windemere*** ca 1784

Colonel Thornton was reported to have been one of the first to use dry flys to catch trout.
Mallett Antique Furniture 2002

Angling



E. F. T. Bennett ***The Great Pike of Loch Alvie*** 1896

As described by Colonel Thornton in *A Sporting Tour of England and Scotland-1804.*

"As soon as we had recovered from the consternation this accident occasioned, I ordered the boat to cruise about, for the chance of his taking me again, which I have known frequently to happen with pike, who are wonderfully bold and voracious: on the second trip I saw a very large fish come at me, and, collecting my line, I felt that I had him fairly hooked; but I feared that he had run himself tight round some root, his weight seemed so dead: we rowed up therefore to the spot when he soon convinced me he was at liberty, by running so far into the lake that I had not one inch of line more to give him. The servants, foreseeing the consequences of my situation, rowed with great expedition towards the fish, which now rose about fifty yards from us, an absolute wonder! I relied on my tackle, which I knew was in every respect excellent, as I had, in consequence of the large pike killed the day before, put on hooks and gimp adjusted with great care; a precaution which would have been thought superfluous in London, as it certainly was for most lakes, though here barely equal to my fish.

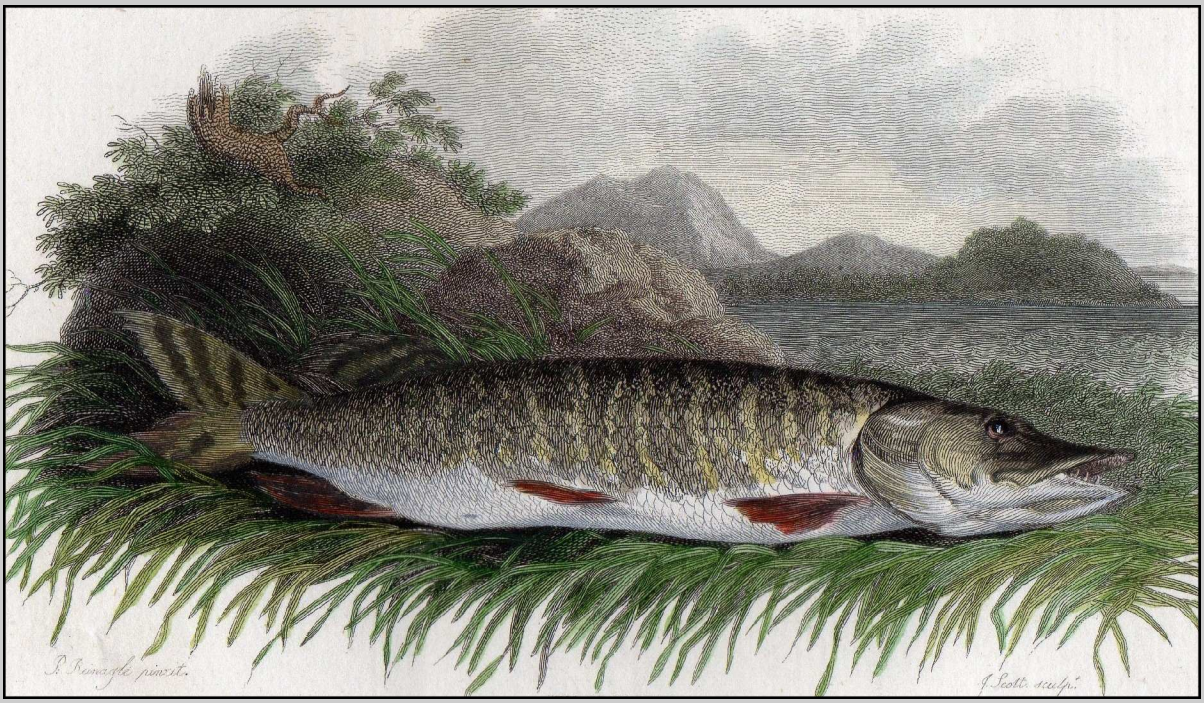
"After playing him for some time I gave the rod to Captain Waller, that he might have the honour of landing him, for I thought him quite exhausted, when to our surprise, we were again constrained to follow the monster nearly across this great lake, having the wind too, much gainst us.. .. Frequently he flew out of the water to such a height that, though I knew the uncommon strength of my tackle, I dreaded losing such an extraordinary fish, and the

Angling

George Garrard ***Landing the Great Pike in Loch Petullich*** ca. 1784

anxiety of our little crew was equal to mine. After about an hour and a quarter's play, however, we thought we might safely attempt to land him, which was done in the following manner; Newmarket, a lad so called from the place of his nativity, who had now come to assist, I ordered, with another servant, to strip and wade in as far as possible, which they readily did. In the meantime I took the landing net, while Captain Waller, judiciously ascending the hill above, drew him gently towards us. He approached the shore very quietly, and we thought him quite safe, when, seeing himself surrounded by his enemies, he in an instant made a last desperate effort, shot into the deep again, and, in the exertion, threw one of the men on his back. His immense size was now very apparent; we proceeded with all due caution, and, being once more drawn towards land, I tried to get his head into the net, upon effecting which, the servants were ordered to seize his tail and slide him on shore. I took all imaginable pains to accomplish this, but in vain, and began to think myself strangely awkward, when at length, having got his snout in, I discovered that the hoop of the net, though adapted to very large pike, would admit no more than that part. He was, however, completely spent, and in a few moments we landed him, a perfect monster ! He was stabbed by my directions in the spinal marrow, with a large knife, which appeared to be the most humane method of killing him, and I then ordered all the signals, with the sky scrapers to be hoisted ; and the whoop re-echoed through the whole range of the Grampians.

Angling



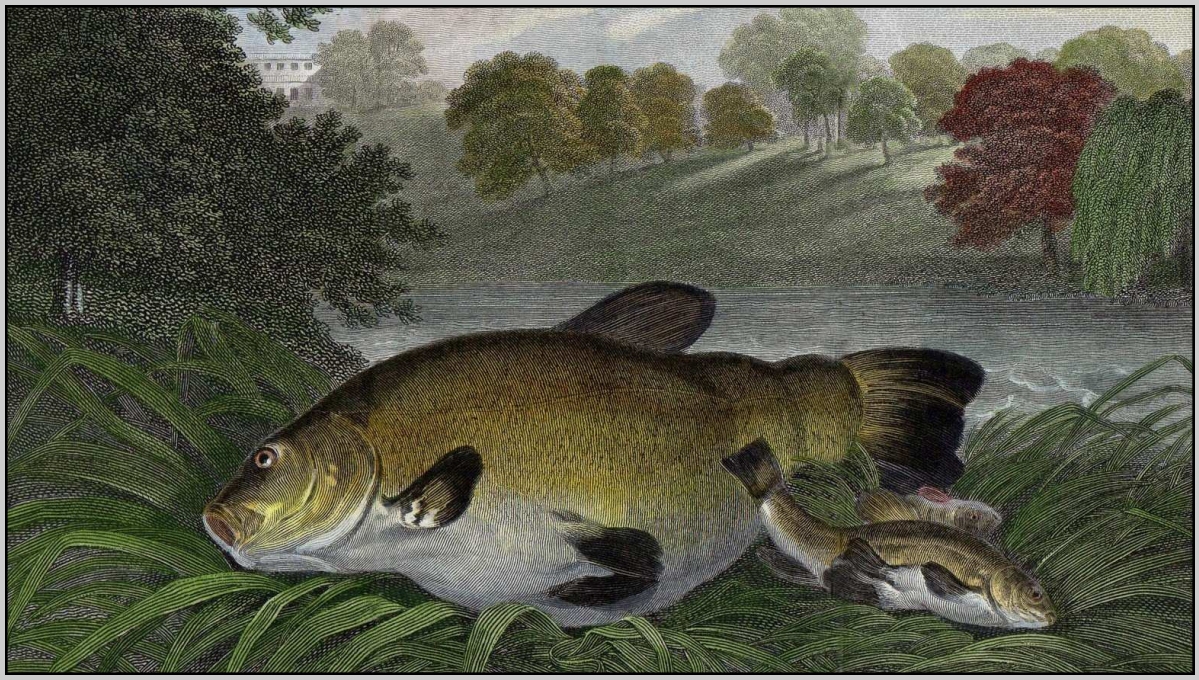
Philip Reinagle ***Pike-Loch Petullich 1784*** Eng. John Scott

Engraving: Rev. Wm. B. Daniel's *Rural Sports*-Vol. 2

"On opening his jaws to endeavour to take the hooks from him, which were both fast in his gorge, so dreadful a forest of teeth, or tusks, I think I never beheld : if I had not had a double link of gimp, with two swivels, the depth between his stomach and mouth would have made the former quite useless. His measurement, accurately taken, was five feet four inches from eye to fork.

"On examining him attentively, I perceived that a very large bag hung deep below his belly, and, thinking it was lower down than usual with other pike, I concluded that this was deeply fed but a short time before he was taken. After exhibiting him, therefore, to several gentlemen, I ordered that my house- keeper on whom I could depend, should have him of his stomach be consisted of part of another pike half digested. The tumor or bag arose from his having, no doubt many years since, golfed a hook, which seemed to us better calculated for sea than for fresh-water fishing. It was wonderfully honey-combed, but free from rust, so that I cannot doubt its having been at least ten years in his belly... The weight of this fish, judging by the trones we had with us, which only weigh twenty-nine pounds, made us, according to our best opinions, estimate him at between forty-seven and forty-eight pounds."

Angling



Philip Reinagle ***The Tench caught at Thornville Royal, Nov. 1801*** Eng. John Scott

Thornville Royal appears in the upper left.

Engraving: Rev. Wm. B. Daniel's *Rural Sports*-Vol. 2

The TENCH of THORNVILLE HOUSE:

A TRUE STORY!!!

O' the marvellous,
At *Thornville House*,
We read of feats in plenty,
Where with *long bow*
They hit, I trow,
Full nineteen shots in twenty!

Their fame to fix,
'Midst other tricks,
In which they so delight, Sir,
These blades, pray know,
The *hatchet throw*,
Till it is out of sight, Sir!

Of beast and bird
Enough we've heard,
By *cracks* as loud as thunder's;
So now they dish
A monster *Fish*,
For those who *bite at wonders!*

The scullion wench
Did catch a *Tench*,
Fatter than Berkshire hogs, Sir,
Which, pretty soul,
Had made his hole
Snug shelter'd by some logs, Sir!

Sans *water* he
Had liv'd d'ye see,
Beneath those roots of wood, Sir!
And there, alack,
Flat on his back,
Had lain since NOAH's flood, Sir!

Now he's in stew,
For public *goût*,
And fed with lettuce-cosse, Sir;
In hopes the Town
Will gulp him down,
With good *humbugging* sauce, Sir!

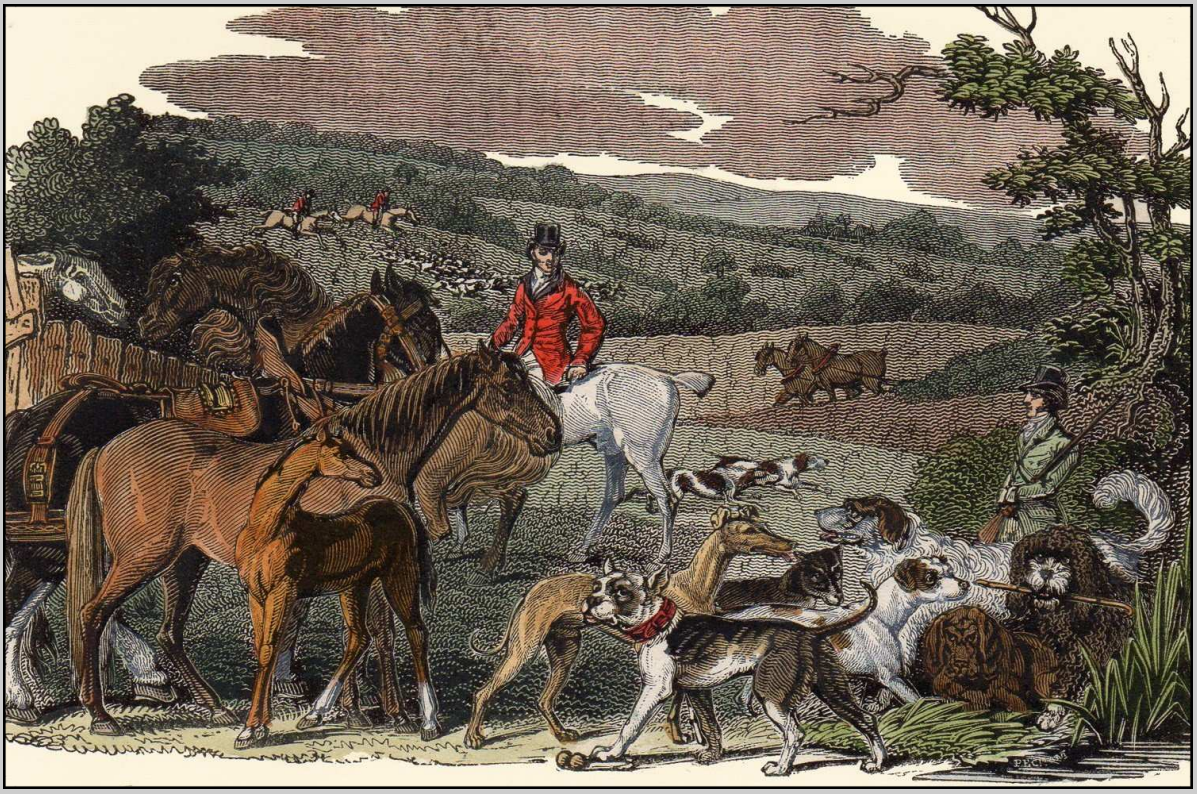
NIM.

A Poem by Nimrod (Charles James Apperley)

Poem: Rev. Wm. B. Daniel's *Rural Sports*-Vol. 2

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Animals

Colonel Thornton Maintained and Bred Every Type of Dog, Hound or Horse Necessary to Conduct His Sporting Activities



The Sportsman's Repository-1845
Engraver: John Scott (1774-1827)

Vignette

The full title is *The Sportsman's Repository comprising a series of highly finished engravings, representing the Horse and the Dog in all their varieties;* by John Scott. From original paintings by Marshall, Reinagle, Gilpin, Stubbs, and Cooper. Since so many of these individual subjects came from paintings by Reinagle, Gilpin and Stubbs, it is relatively safe to surmise they were engraved from paintings originally in the possession of their chief patron Colonel Thornton. This vignette depicts many working and sporting animals which Colonel Thornton maintained in order to pursue his various sporting activities. Where it is deemed appropriate the individual engravings are supplied.

Beagles

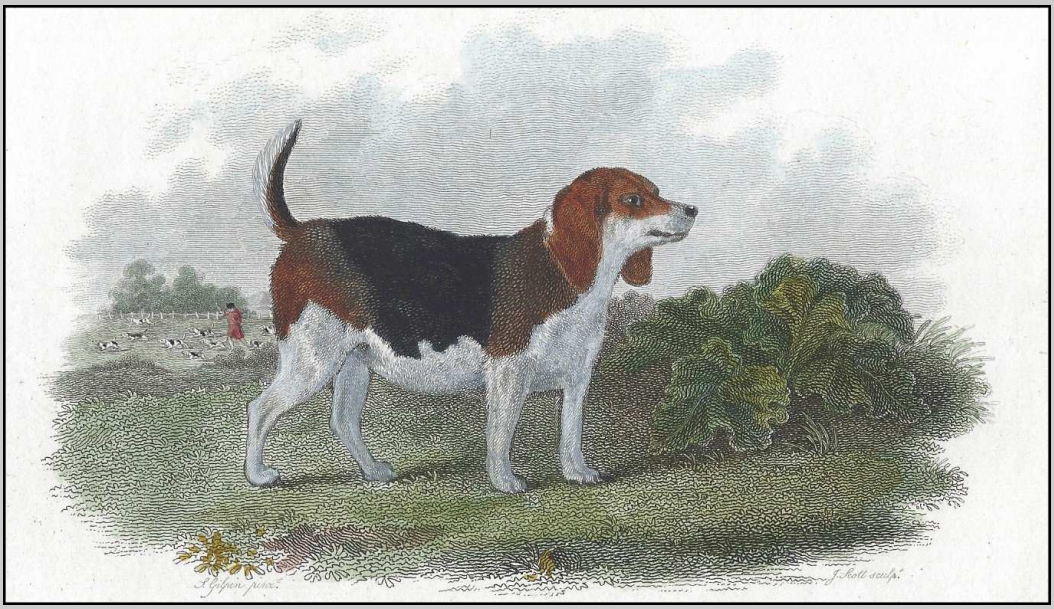
Philip Reinagle ***Colonel Thornton's Beagles*** Eng. John Scott

Note the hunters on horseback as one of them is likely Colonel Thornton.
The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Philip Reinagle ***Colonel Thornton's Lap Dog Beagles*** Eng. John Scott

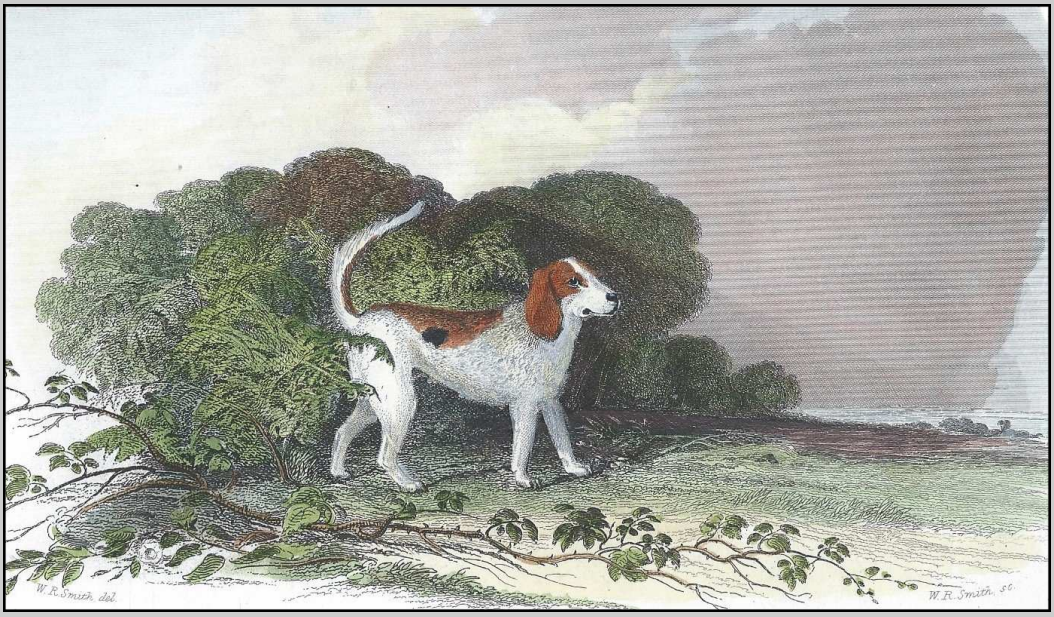
Identified as Colonel Thornton's famous lap dog beagle "Merryman" with Juliet, Caustic and Beauty his daughters. Note the "T" on "Merryman's" back clearly identifying him as belonging to Colonel Thornton.
Anecdotes of Dogs by Edward Jesse-1846

Beagles



Sawrey Gilpin ***Beagle*** Eng. John Scott

Rural Sports b y Rev. William B. Daniel-1801



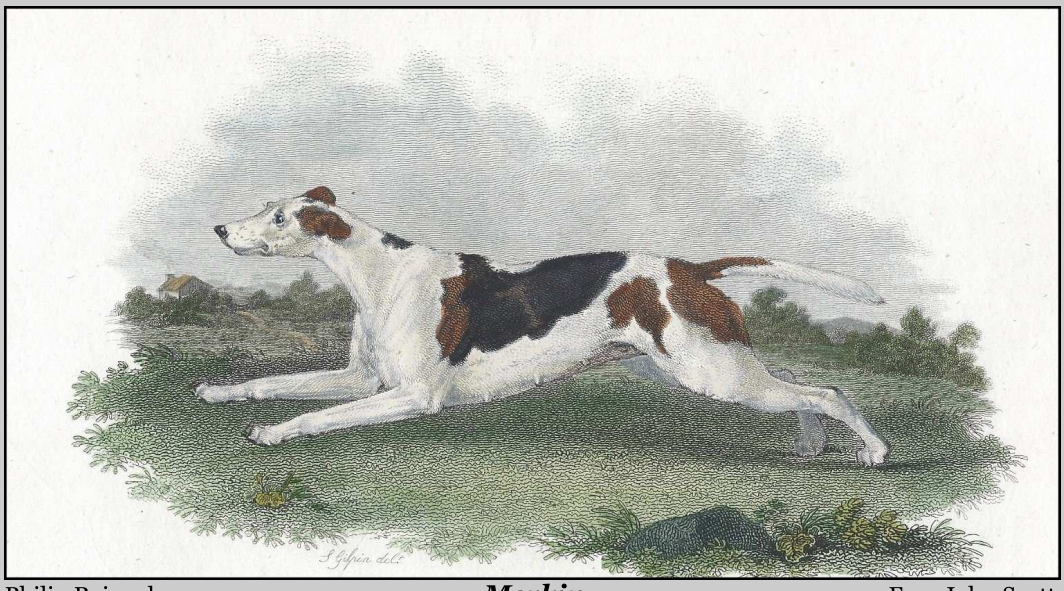
W. R. Smith ***Blue Bell a Beagle*** Eng. W. R. Smith

Owned by Sir John Saunders Sebright, a falconer
and likely hunting companion of Colonel Thornton.
Anecdotes of Dogs by Edward Jesse-1846

Foxhounds

Philip Reinagle ***Southern Hound*** Eng. John Scott

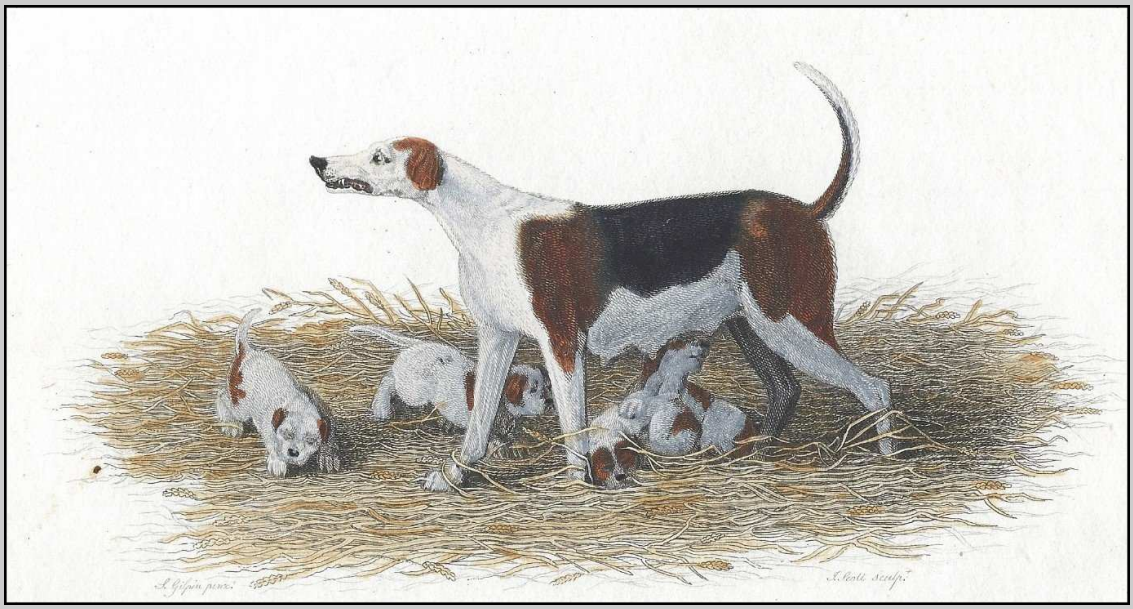
This breed was noted for its excellent nose tracking ability and melodious voice.
It was crossed with foxhounds in the hopes of improving the faster
Northern Foxhounds but with unsatisfactory results.
The Sportsman's Repository -1820



Philip Reinagle ***Merkin*** Eng. John Scott

One of the most famous of Colonel Thornton's Foxhounds
who ran a four mile trial in 7 minutes and a half second.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Foxhounds



Philip Reinagle ***Modish*** Eng. John Scott

A foxhound of great celebrity with her whelps.
She was still hunting at age 23 with the Colonel in Wiltshire.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

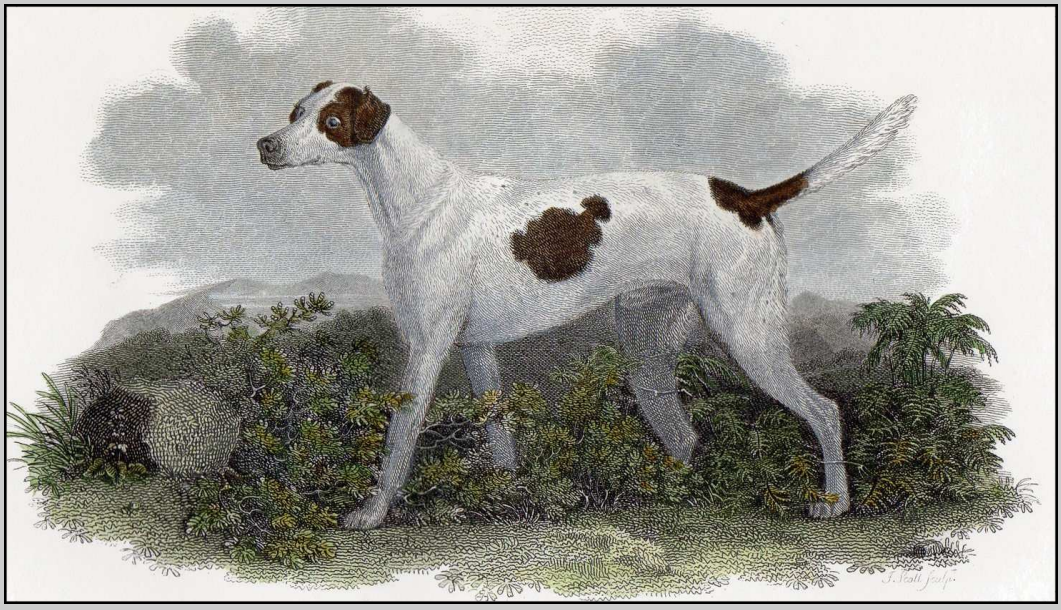
Philip Reinagle ***Foxhounds*** Eng. John Scott

A fox hunt in Yorkshire likely depicting Colonel Thornton with the main pack in the backgrounds.
The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Pointers

Philip Reinagle ***Pero, Son of Pluto*** ca. 1792

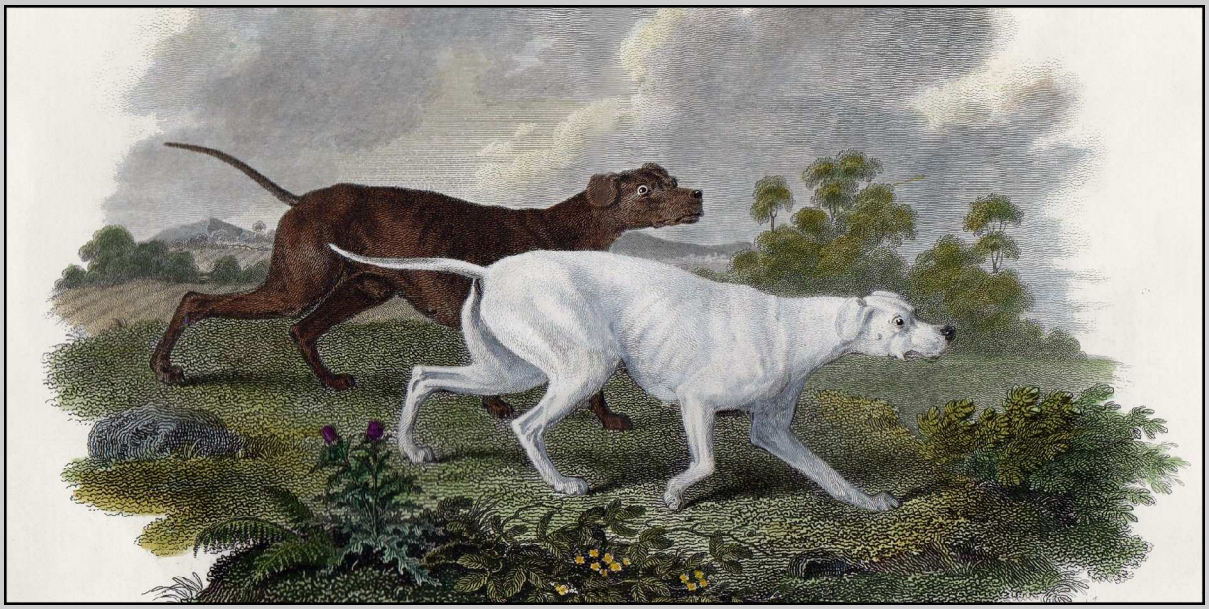
One of the Colonels favorite pointers. Note the "T" tattooed on back.



Sawrey Gilpin ***Dash*** 1788

The most celebrated of Colonel Thornton's pointers and was believed to be the predecessor to all modern pointers by crossing a Spanish pointer with a fox hound to add stamina and speed.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Pointers



Sawrey Gilpin ***Pluto and Juno*** Eng John Scott

Two of the most celebrated pointers of Colonel Thornton's from the same bloodline as "Dash."
The two pointers stood on point for an hour and a quarter while the artist completed his sketch.
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Philip Reinagle ***Pointers on the Moor*** 1792

Colonel Thornton is seen approaching from behind.
The position of the two pointers likely indicates that the above painting
was largely drawn from Gilpin's "Pluto and Juno."

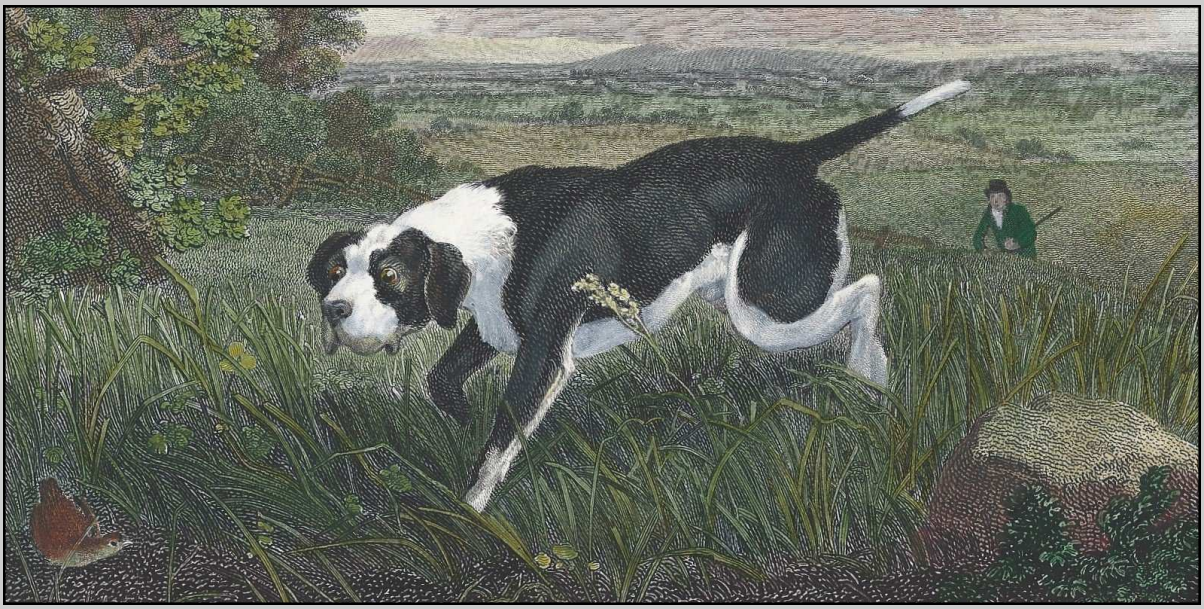
Pointers

Philip Reinagle ***Pointers on The Moor***

George Morland ***Pointer and Hare*** Eng. John Scott

A portrait of one of Colonel Thornton's pointers that was sold as part of the Hickman's sale in 1820 as item 33.

Pointers



Philip Reinagle ***Spanish Pointer*** **Eng. John Scott**

An example of the breed used to develop the modern English pointer when crossed with a foxhound. The approaching figure is likely Colonel Thornton as he was a patron of Reinagle.

The Sportsman's Repository -1820

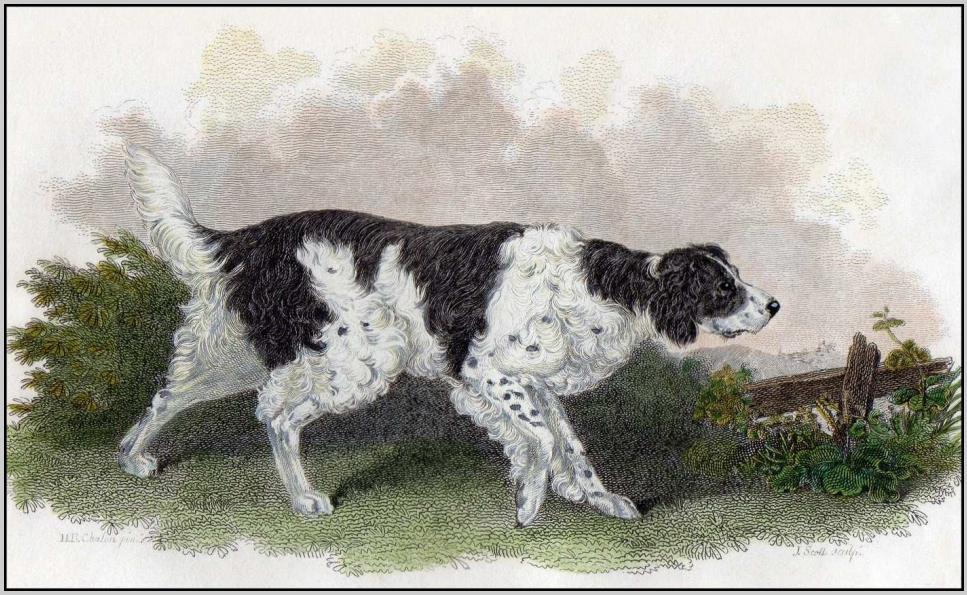
Philip Reinagle ***Pointer and Grouse*** Eng. John Scott

A pointer on a grouse moor with two approaching sportsmen one of which is likely Colonel Thornton.

The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Setters

Philip Reinagle ***Setter and Black Grouse*** Eng. John Scott
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801



Philip Reinagle ***The Old English Setter*** Eng. John Scott
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Spaniels and Terriers

Philip Reinagle ***Field Spaniels*** Eng. John Scott

The "T" on these spaniels clearly indicates they belong to Colonel Thornton.
Anecdotes of Dogs by Edward Jesse-1846

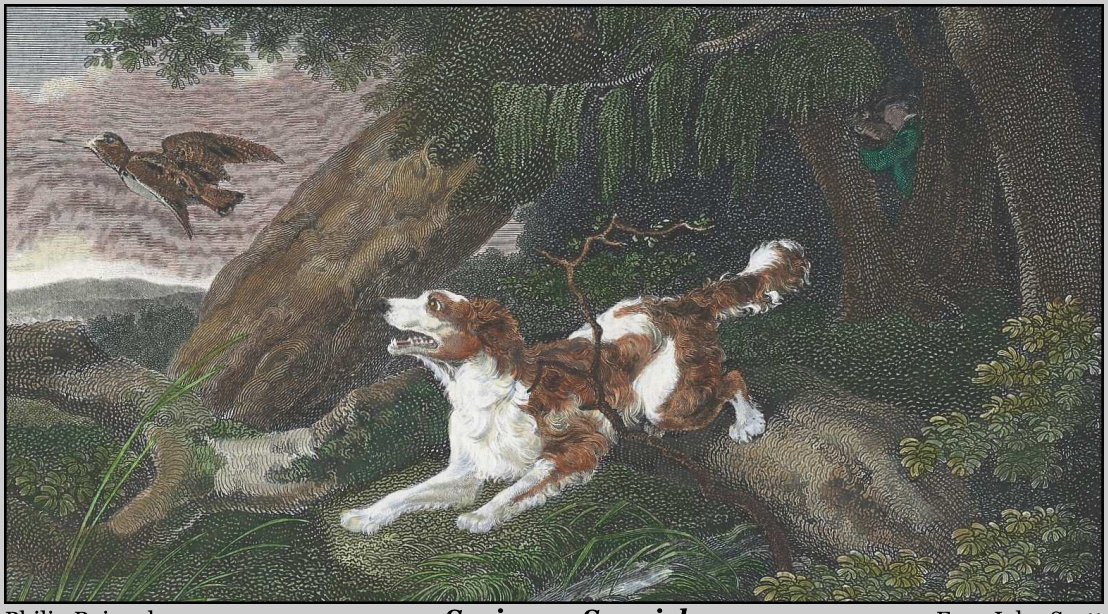
Philip Reinagle ***Terriers*** Eng. John Scott

Colonel Thornton is credited with developing the first white terriers in England. "Pitch" was the most recognized with "Vixen" notable for her exploits during the *Sporting Tour of France*.
The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Spaniels

Philip Reinagle ***Water Spaniel*** Eng. John Scott

The Sportsman's Repository -1820



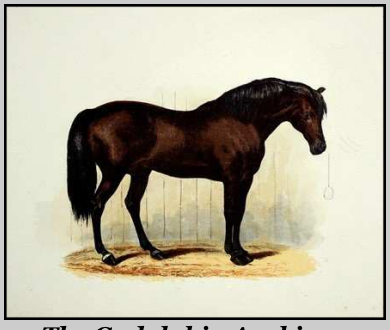
Philip Reinagle ***Springer Spaniel*** Eng. John Scott

The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Thoroughbred and Hunting Horses

The Darley Arabian

The Byerley Turk



The Godolphin Arabian

Horse racing in England began as early as 1174 when 4-mile races were staged in London. These early races involved only two to three horses and would be called match races today. The development of the modern Thoroughbred racehorse began with the importation of horses from Syria and Turkey in the late 17th Century and the early 18th Century: the Byerley Turk (1680's) and the Darley Arabian (1704) and the Godolphin Arabian (1729). These horses were bred to English mares resulting in the modern Thoroughbred racehorse.

Each of these three major Thoroughbred foundation sires was able to perpetuate their male line ((Y) chromosomes) through just one of their descendents each. Matchem was the only descendant of his grandsire, the Godolphin Arabian, to maintain a male line to the present; the Byerley Turk's male line was preserved by Herod (or King Herod), a great-great-grandson; and the male line of the Darley Arabian owes its existence to great-great-grandson Eclipse who was the dominant racehorse of his day and never defeated. One genetic study indicates that 95% of all male Thoroughbreds trace their direct male line via the Y chromosome to the Darley Arabian. The America racehorse and Triple Crown winner Secretariat traces his male genes to Eclipse and the Darley Arabian.

Colonel Thornton was born in the 18th century when horse racing was extremely popular having obtained Royal support. The first published Stud Book to document Thoroughbred bloodlines was published in 1793. He was able to breed many of his horses to the immediate descendants of these famous Arabians. One of the most famous Thoroughbred foundation sires was the never beaten *Eclipse* who produced Colonel Thorntons primary stud *Jupiter*. Colonel Thornton had his own stable of racehorses but was also interested in developing a hunting horse that exhibited the stamina and speed inherited from the Arabians. The results were exceptionally fast horses with the necessary stamina for long extended fox hunts. These excellent horses were utilized in all aspects of the Colonel's sporting activities as well as daily life at Thornville Royal. The superb pedigrees of the Colonel's horses are illustrated in the horse sale catalogue of 1805, which actually represents only a small portion of the number of horses he maintained as he took many others with him to Falconer's Hall and Spye Park.

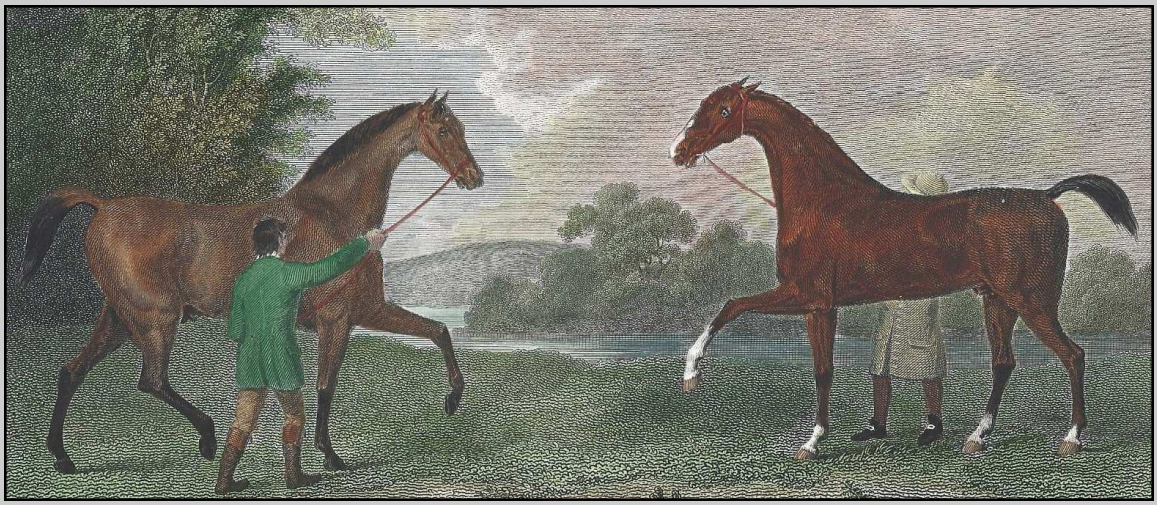
Thoroughbred and Hunting Horses

J.N. Sartorius ***Eclipse*** ***Shakespeare*** *Eng. John Scott*

Eclipse: Sire: Marske, Dam: Spiletta by Regulus. Eclipse was foaled during the great solar eclipse that occurred in 1764. Eclipse did not start racing until age 5 and only raced for 2 years. He won all 18 of his starts, and was declared the greatest runner the turf had seen since Flying Childers. In 1771 he was retired to stud where he sired 344 winners.

Shakespeare: Sire: Hobgoblin, Dam: Amoret by Bartlett's Childers. Chestnut 1745. Ran from 1749 to 1753. At 5, beat Snail and five others in a 4 mile race for five year olds. At 6, won the King's Plate at Guildford and the King's Plate at Lincoln (4 miles each). At stud he sired a number of good mares.

The Sportsman's Repository -1820



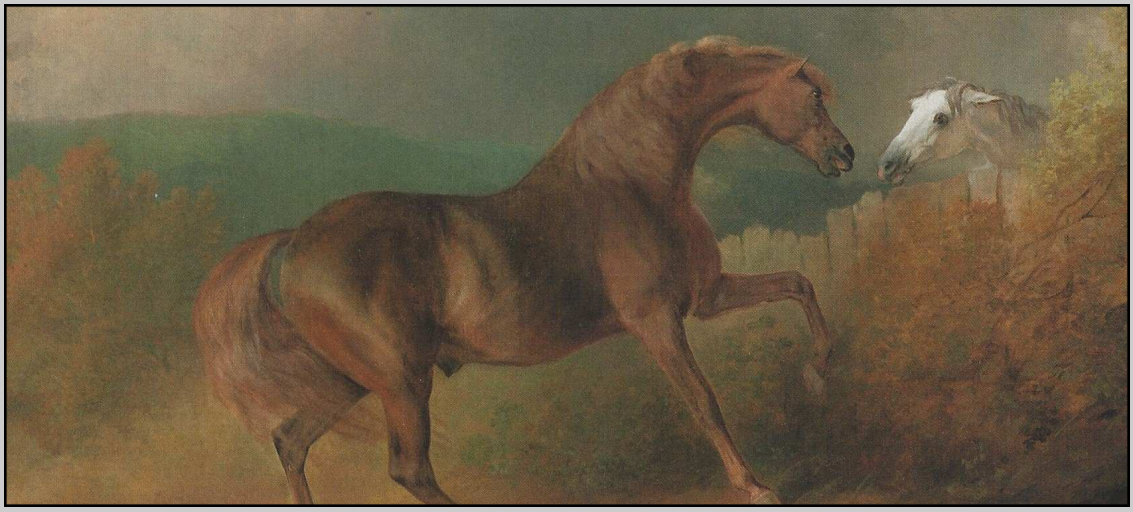
J.N. Sartorius ***King Herod*** ***Flying Childers*** *Eng. John Scott*

Herod: Bay colt, 1758. Sire: Tartar, Dam: Cyton by Blaze. Herod was the leading sire in Great Britain eight times, from 1777 to 1784, at which point his son Highflyer took over and led as the sire of winners from 1785 to 1796 and again in 1798. Highflyer's son Sir Peter Teazle led from 1799 to 1802, and from 1804 to 1809. Herod's sireline was the dominant sireline in Europe and America as well.

Flying Childers: Bay Colt 1714. Sire: Darley Arabian, Dam: Betty Leeds. Flying Childers is considered the first truly great race horse in the history of the Thoroughbred. He began racing at age six winning every race he entered. Retired to stud, he produced numerous winners but was considered a better racer.

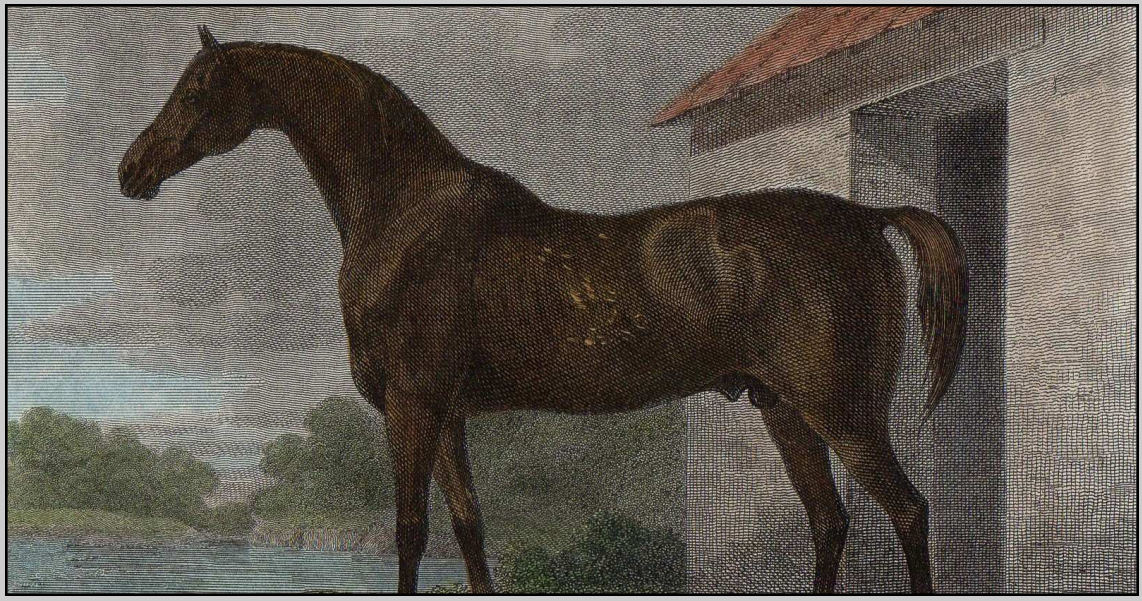
The Sportsman's Repository -1820

Thoroughbred and Hunting Horses



Sawrey Gilpin ***Old Jupiter*** 1792

SIRE: Eclipse - Marske - Squirt - Bartlett's Childers - DARLEY ARABIAN. DAM: Mare by Tartar - Chestnut 1774. Bred by Dennis O'Kelly. Sold to Thomas Douglas who ran him between 1777 and 1779. At age 3, he won two sweepstakes at Newmarket, beating horses such as Comet, Sweet Marjoram and Vengeance. He won one race in 1778, running last in the Newmarket October subscription purse won by Highflyer, and failed to place in 1779. Retired to Douglas' stud, afterwards stood in Yorkshire at the stud of Colonel Thornton. This painting sold at Hickman's in May, 1820.



Sawrey Gilpin ***Young Jupiter*** Eng. John Scott

SIRE: Jupiter - Eclipse - Marske - Squirt - Bartlett's Childers - DARLEY ARABIAN. DAM: Miss Blanchard by Highflyer Bay 1792. Bred by Colonel Thornton at his stud in Yorkshire, and sold to Sir John Ramsden. Raced at Newmarket and country meets between 1797 and 1798, mostly at 4 mile distances. In 1797 won at Derby, the Gold Cup (3 miles) at Chesterfield, beating Moorcock. In 1798 he won a sweep at Newmarket Second Spring, beating Bennington and others, a King's Plate at Lewes, a Ladies' Plate at Newmarket Spring (beating Oaks winner Bellisima); a King's Plate at Newmarket October. Retired to stud at the end of the season. *The Sporting Magazine*-1812

Thoroughbred and Hunting Horses

Henry Bernard Chalon ***Thornton Castle and Thorntoniana*** Eng. William Ward 1808

This beautiful engraving was recently discovered at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, CT. The inscription indicates that Thornton Castle was got by Father O'Leary, dam by Sir Thomas, Grand Dam by Eclipse. Thorntoniana by Anvil, son of King Herod, Dam by Venus by Eclipse, sister to Jupiter, Mercury, Volunteer, and Queen Mab. The terrier in the foreground is "Vixen" made famous for her hunting tenacity during the Colonel's sporting tour to France.

Thoroughbred and Hunting Horses

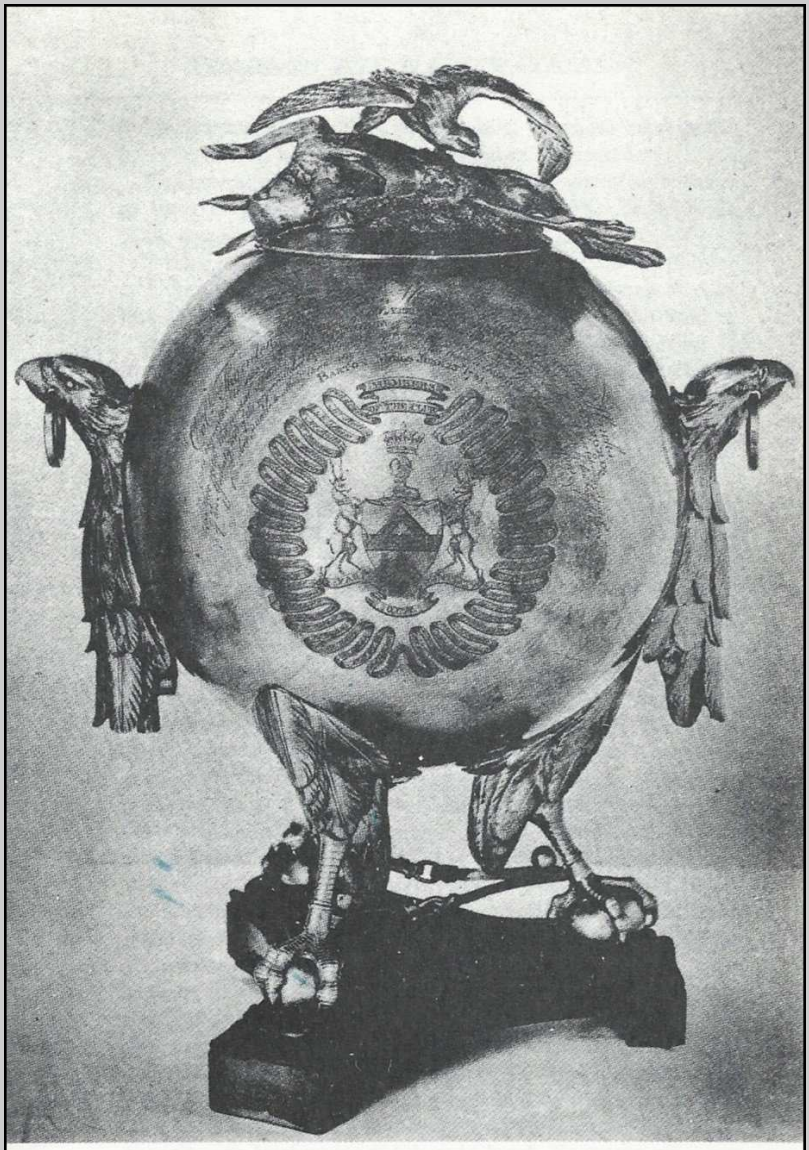
John Best (d. 1801) **Colonel Thomas Thornton and Hunter** c. 1795
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30 1/8 in.

Given the white diamond on the horse's face, this is likely the "Diamond" referred to in Thornton's "Sporting Tour Through France." John Best, based in London, painted a variety of animal portraits and made copies of the works of George Stubbs (1724-1806), but signed "J. Best" and "after Stubbs." This painting bears a spurious signature, "G. Stubbs RA." During cleaning and conservation in 2020, infrared reflectography revealed the signature "J. Best" beneath overpainting near the Stubbs signature. The painting may be one of the many sporting portraits commissioned by Thornton of himself. The back of the canvas has an inscription stating that it was relined in 1890 and the frame has a label of James A. Bourlet & Sons, Ltd. (Fine Art Packers, Frame Makers) in London of that date. The painting was later owned by Mrs. Francis Warrington Gillet at her Fox Den Farm in Glyndon, Maryland. Upon the death of Mrs. Gillet in 1971, the farm was purchased from her estate by Harry Z. Isaacs and renamed Brookfield Farm. Mr. Isaacs also purchased this painting from the estate. It was included in his estate sale in 1991 at Sotheby's in New York, attributed to John Nost Sartorius. It appeared at auction again in 2019 at Cordier Auctions, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when it was purchased by E. Randolph Hooks, Lunenburg County, Virginia.

Sporting Trophies

Colonel Thornton Received Several
Significant Trophies from His Friends
for His Sporting Accomplishments

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn



SILVER GILT URN
Presented to Colonel Thornton of Thornville Royal
by the members of the Falconry Club,
Barton Mills, 23 June, 1781.
Now in the possession of the Earl of Orford.

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

This is the way the urn appeared in James Edmund Harting's *Bibliotheca Accipitraria* in 1891. It is easy to see why the urn was thought to be silver rather than gold. The polished gilt surface was altered photographically so that the glare and reflection would not affect the image,

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn
Sotheby's: *Important Silver, Russian Works of Art and Objects of Vertu*, October 24, 2000. Lot 309.
This image does not accurately portray the highly polished surface of the actual urn.

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Full View of Front of Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Manufactured by J. Wakelin &Wm. Taylor Silversmiths London 1781

This frontal view illustrates the Orford Family Crest along with the inscription from the Falconers's Club and the members names engraved in the ribbon surrounding Lord Orford's Crest. The ivory key on the left side dispenses tea from the bottom between the three legs. The breast feathers from the hawk move to the side to allow access.

Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Rear View of Silver Gilt Tea Urn

The rear view of the urn illustrating the Family Crest of Colonel Thornton.
The reflective nature of the polished surface makes the urn very difficult to photograph as seen above.
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

View of Left Side
Illustrating the moved position of the breast feathers with the key inserted.
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

View of Right Side
No movable breast feathers and the hawk holding a silver ring as does the left.
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Rear View of Urn Illustrating The Heraldic Arms of Colonel Thornton

Thornton's Coat of Arms on the Urn compares faithfully with his bookplate on the adjoining page and also includes the image of a mole just below the shield. The mole was referred to by some as "The little Gentleman in Black Velvet" which became a symbol of the Jacobites (a latinized form of James) who were supported by Scottish Clans and the Catholic French. Colonel Thomas Thornton, a Francophile and Scottish supporter, was likely sympathetic to the Jacobite cause and added the "little gentleman" to his family coat of arms as early as 1781 on the urn. The mole was selected by the Jacobites after King William III who deposed King James was killed when his horse stumbled on a molehill while hunting. He died from the resulting injuries and the monarchy passed to Queen Anne under whom England, Ireland and Scotland became the United Kingdom.

Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

LA VERITE GAGNERA
LE · PROTECTEUR · ET · L'IDOLE · DES · SOLDATS ·
FIEZ VOUS EN NOUS.
Lt. Colonel Thos. Thornton.
Thornville Royal, Falconers Hall & Kenyon House.

Heraldic Arms of Lt. Colonel Thornton

The bookplate illustrates eight "quartered" Arms.
This is a method of joining several different arms together in one shield by dividing the shield into equal parts and placing the different arms a person is entitled to bear in each division.

The Arms of Colonel Thornton are in the first and eighth quarters.
Top Row are: Thornton, Savile, Myster, Ames.
Bottom Row: Norton, Wentworth, Armitage, Thornton.

Inscriptions:
La Vertite Gagnera- "The Truth will Prevail"
Le Protecteur et L'Idole des Soldats- "The Protector and the Idol of Soldiers"
Fiez Vous En Nous- "Trust In Us"

The Thornton Family Crest

The Thornton Family Crest appears on the opposite side of the urn and is illustrated from Colonel Thornton's bookplate found in his personal copy of *A Sporting Tour of France*, which The Archives of Falconry purchased from the Christie's Auction in January 27, 2006 of the Estate of His Royal Highness the Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester.

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Front View of Urn
Illustrating Lord Orford's Family Crest
Along with a closer view of club members names
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

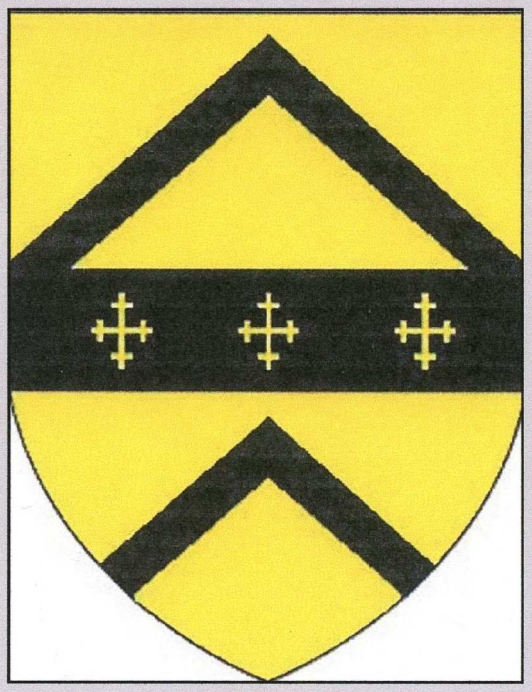
The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

Inscription

"Colonel Thornton, proposer and manager of the Confederate Hawks, is requested to receive this piece of plates from George, Earl of Orford. together with the united thanks of the members of the Falconer's Club, as a testimony of their esteem and just sense of his assiduity, and of the unparalleled excellence to which, in the course of nine years' management, he has brought them, when unable to attend any longer, he made them a present to the Earl of Orford, Barton Mills, 23rd June 1781."

Earl of Orford
Mr. Sturt
Mr. Snow
Mr. Smith
Mr. Stephens
Earl Ferrers
Hon. Thos. Shirley
Sir Thos. Tancred
Mr. A. Wilkinson
Mr. B. Wrightson
Mr. Drummond
Sir Cornwallis Maude
Duke of Ancaster
Mr. Williamson
Mr. Baker
Mr. William Baker
Mr. Pierce
Mr. Coke
Duke of Rutland
Mr. Belford
Mr. Lascelles Lascelles
Mr. Parker
Mr. Tyssen
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Affleck
Mr. St. George
Earl of Eglinton

Earl of Orford
Family Crest



Chaplain
Mr. Edward Parsons

Mr. Vaughan
Mr. R. Wilson
Mr. Musters
Mr. Barrington Price
Mr. Daniel
Hon. Mr. Rowley
Lord Mulgrave
Captain Grimston
Captain Yarburgh
Earl of Leicester
Mr. Stanhope
Mr. Leighton
Mr. Francis Barnard
Mr. Nelthorpe
Mr. Porter
Colonel St. Leger
Mr. Serle
Mr. Parkhurst
Mr. Molyneux
Earl of Surrey
Sir William Milner
Sir John Ramsden
Mr. Royds
Sir Richard Symonds
Earl of Leinster
Earl of Lincoln
Marquis of Granby

The Earl of Orford Family Crest With inscription And Club Members Names

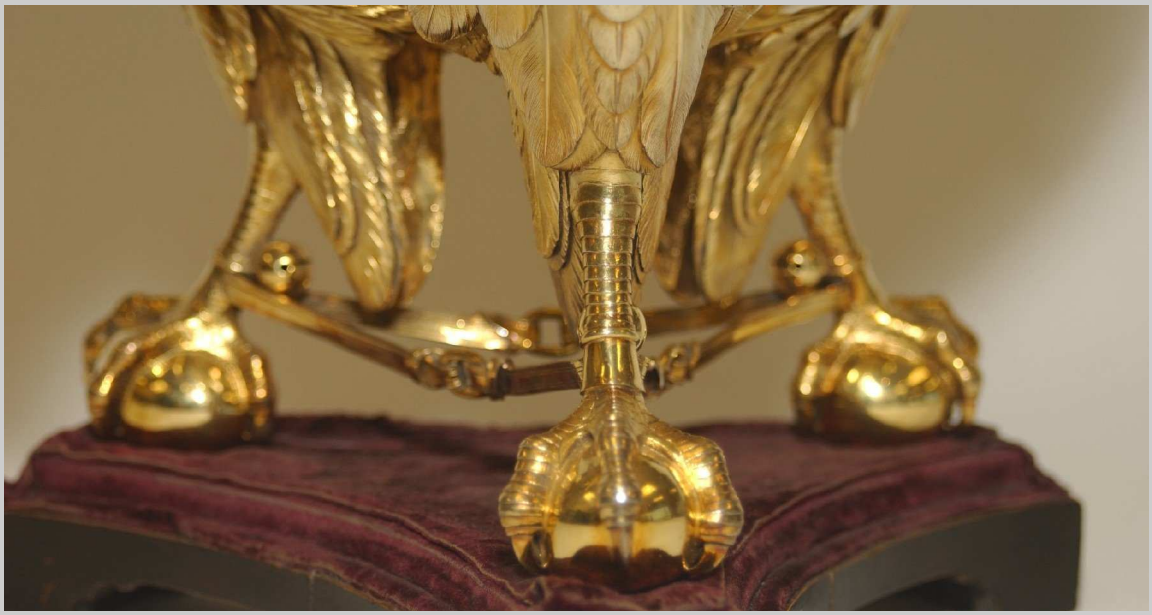
The Orford Family Crest and presentation inscription appear on one side of the urn.
The inscription and names were taken from J. E. Harting's Bibliotheca Accipitraria 1891 page 255

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

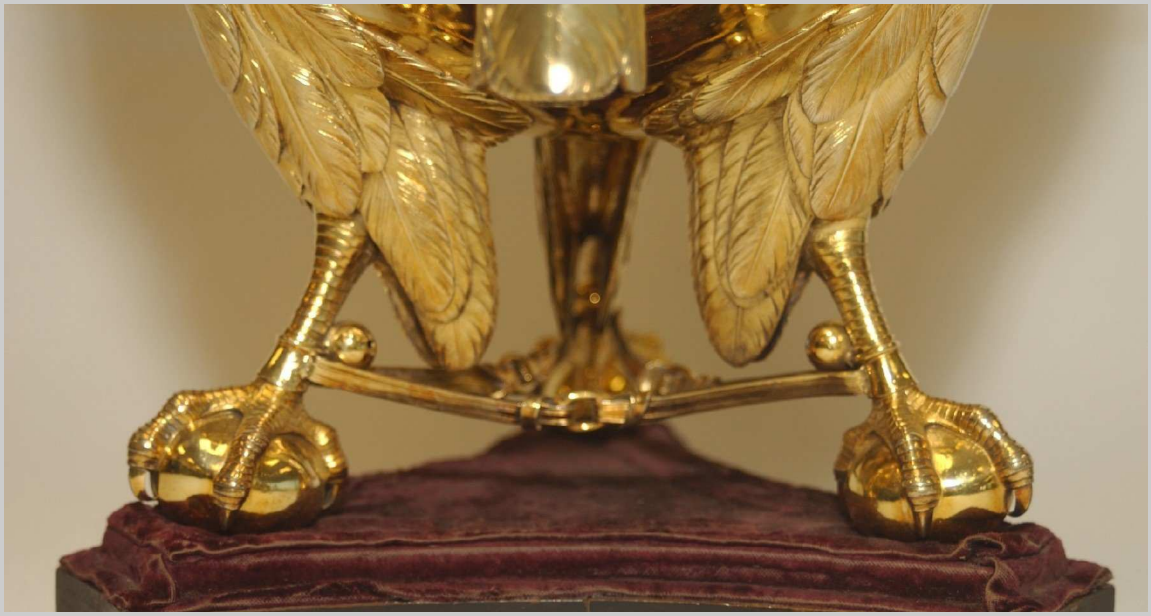
Front view of the lid with a goshawk on a hare
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

Rear view of the lid with a goshawk on a hare
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn



Front view of one foot grasping a ball
with intricate details of hawk's scales on the toes
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry



Side view of the three supporting legs each grasping a ball
with legs equipped with bells and jesses
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

The original urn presentation and storage box
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

The original urn presentation and storage box with lid open
Image: Jim Hansen at The Archives of Falconry

George III Antique English Silver Gilt Epergne

Colonel Thornton's Presentation Epergne

J. Wakelin & Wm. Taylor
Silversmiths London 1782

S.J. Shrubsole

Inscription around the central bowl

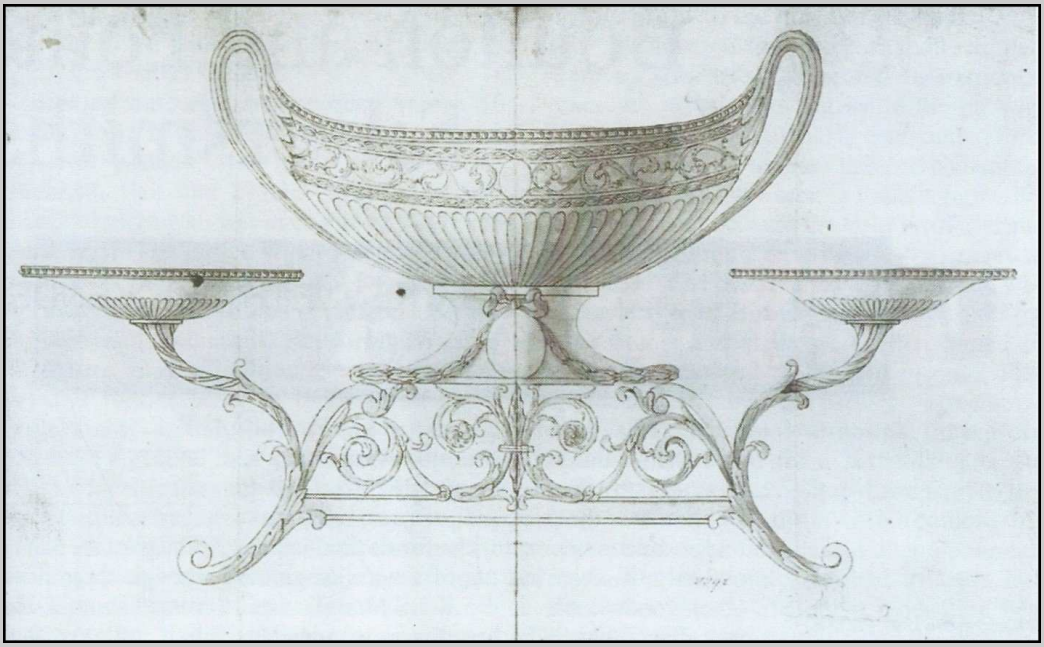
"COL. THORNTON received this Piece of Plate of SIR HARRY FEATHERSTONE and SIR JOHN RAMSDEN Barts; as a compromise to a Bett made in honor of a Hambleton Fox: COL. THORNTON by his original bett engaged for 300 Guineas P.P. to find a FOX at Hunts Whint, or in the Easingwold Country, that after Christmas 1779 should run Twenty Miles. The Day to be fixed and Morning approved by COL. THORNTON, and to be determined by SIR J. RAMSDEN and SIR H: FEATHERSTONE, or the Company up."

Description

In yellow and rose gilding, the central basket vertically fluted and pierced with a band of matted classical scrolling foliage, engraved with lengthy inscriptions on sides and base, also engraved with contemporary arms, the opposite side lightly flat-chased with the kill below the words "the blood of old conqueror", the stand with an openwork apron of finely chased classical foliage and fitted with four screw-on fluted dishes with beaded rims, the central basket with detachable two-handled liner, fully marked on frame and basket liner, maker's mark and lion passant on dishes.

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

George III Antique English Silver Gilt Epergne



Epergne Design

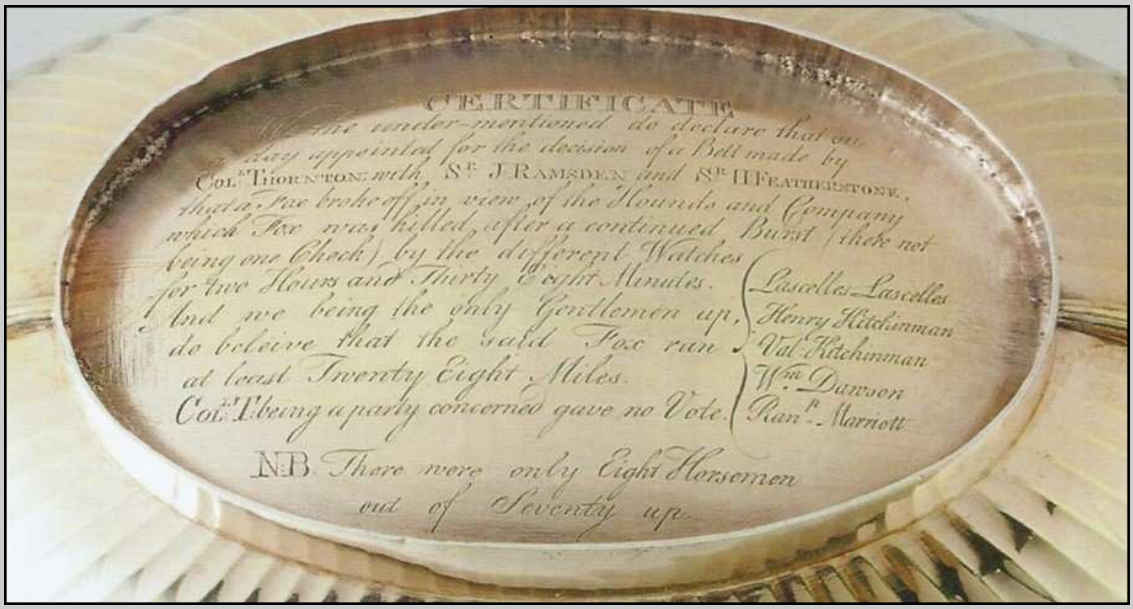
The design for this epergne, in pen and ink wash, is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Hilary Young associates it with the circles of William Chambers and John Yenn: "the conception of the pieces is architectural, with its spool-shaped support, cornucopia branches and elegant neoclassical pierced borders and openwork scrolls. The draughtmanship is assured and characteristic of a hand trained in an architect's office; and in this it is in marked contrast to the foot hesitantly added in pencil to the right leg, presumably by the working goldsmith charged with the job of executing it." (Young, op. cit.)

The sophistication of the design puts it into the advanced taste of its day, as one would expect from retailers such as Parker and Wakelin, and for such fashionable clients as Sir John Ramsden, Sir Harry Featherstone, and Colonel Thornton.

Floral Design

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

George III Antique English Silver-Gilt Epergne


CERTIFICATE
We the under-mentioned do declare that on
a day appointed for the decision of a Bett made by
Col.ᵒ Thornton with Sᵗ J. Ramsden and Sᵗ H. Featherstone,
that a Fox broke off in view of the Hounds and Company
which Fox was killed, after a continued Burst (there not
being one Check) by the different Watches
for two Hours and Thirty Eight Minutes.
And we being the only Gentlemen up,
do beleive that the said Fox ran
at least Twenty Eight Miles.
Colᵒ T being a party concerned gave no Vote.
Lascelles Lascelles
Henry Kitchinman
Val. Kitchinman
Wᵐ Dawson
Ranᵖ Marriott
NB There were only Eight Horsemen
out of Seventy up.

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

Sir Henry Featherstone

CERTIFICATE

"We the under-mentioned do declare that on a day appointed for the decision of a Bett made by COL. THORNTON with SIR J: RAMSDEN and SIR H: FEATHERSTONE, that a Fox broke off in view of the Hounds and Company which Fox was killed, after a continued Burst (there not being one Check) by the different Watches for two Hours and Thirty-Eight Minutes. And we being the only Gentlemen up, do believe the said Fox ran at least Twenty Eight Miles. COL. T. being a party concerned gave no Vote. Lascelles Lascelles, Henry Kitchinman, Val: Kitchinman, Wm Dawson, Ranp. Marriott N:B. There were only Eight Horsemen out of Seventy up."

George III Antique English Silver-Gilt Epergne

The Blood of Old Conqueror
Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

Colonel Thornton's Coat of Arms
Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

A George III Antique English Silver-Gilt Fox Head Snuff Box

Fox Head Snuff Box
Made by Thomas Phipps & Edward Robinson.
Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

A George III Antique English Silver-Gilt Fox Head Snuff Box

Merryman
Colonel Thornton's favorite beagle.
Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

Inscription
Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

A Pair of Eighteenth Century Silver-Mounted Leather Blackjacks

Blackjacks ca 1780

A Blackjack is a tankard made of leather (usually tar-coated) for holding beer or ale. The jack received its name from its distinctive shape taken from the archers and guardsmen jacket style called a jack. The pitch or tar covering rendered them black thus the name blackjack. It was such a popular item that even poems were written.

"He that drinks in a Jack looks as fierce as a Spark,
That were just ready cockt to shoot at a Mark;
When the other thing up to the Mouth it goes,
Makes a Man look with a great Bottle Nose:
All wise men conclude that a Jack New or Old,
Tho' beginning to leak is, however, worth Gold;
For when a poor man on the way doth trudge it,
His worn-out Jack serves him for a Budget;
And I wish his Heirs may never lack Sack
That first contrived the Leather Black Jack."

The blackjack was a portable drinking vessel that Colonel Thornton would have taken with him on his frequent trips and hunting excursions. It was a perfect tankard for the rowdy evening celebration and revelry.

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

A Pair of Eighteenth Century Silver-Mounted Leather Blackjacks

Merryman-Colonel Thornton's Lap Dog Beagle

Each blackjack is dedicated to a favorite hunting hound with a ring of antique silver engraved with the hound's name. Merryman was Colonel Thornton's favorite small beagle referred to as lap dog beagles. His entire beagle pack descended from this famous hound.

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

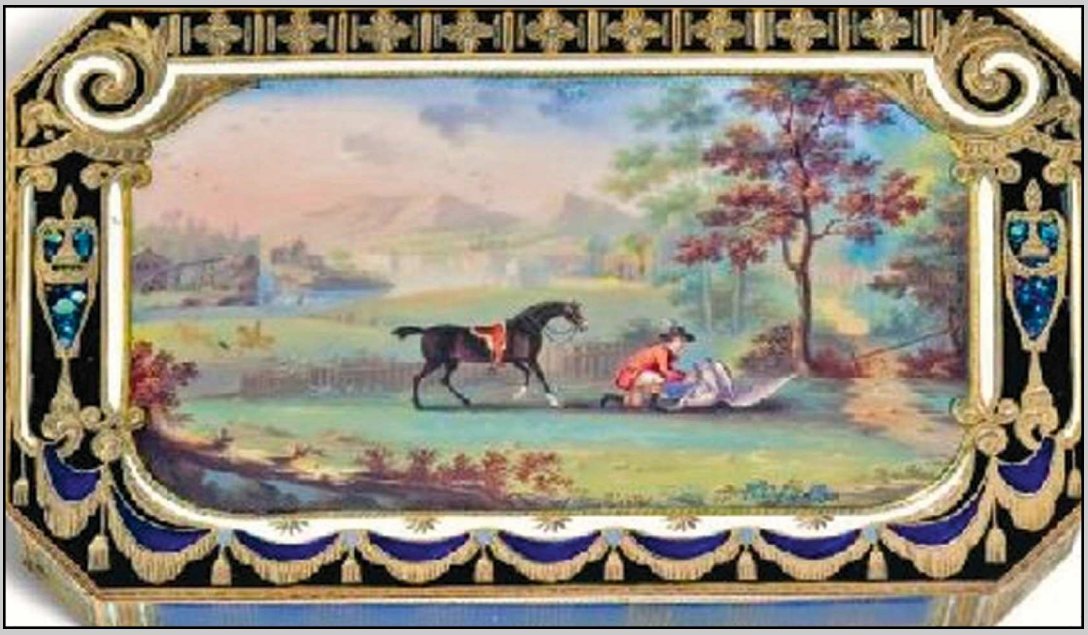
Old Conqueror-The Foundation Sire for Colonel Thornton's Foxhounds

No information has been found to indicate where *Old Conqueror* came from but it is clear he was well recognized that any foxhunter considered him one of the finest to ever hunt. All of the Colonel's pack of foxhounds descended from this sire including *Modish* and *Merkin* portrayed in this work.

Photos courtesy of Tim Martin of S. J. Shrubsole

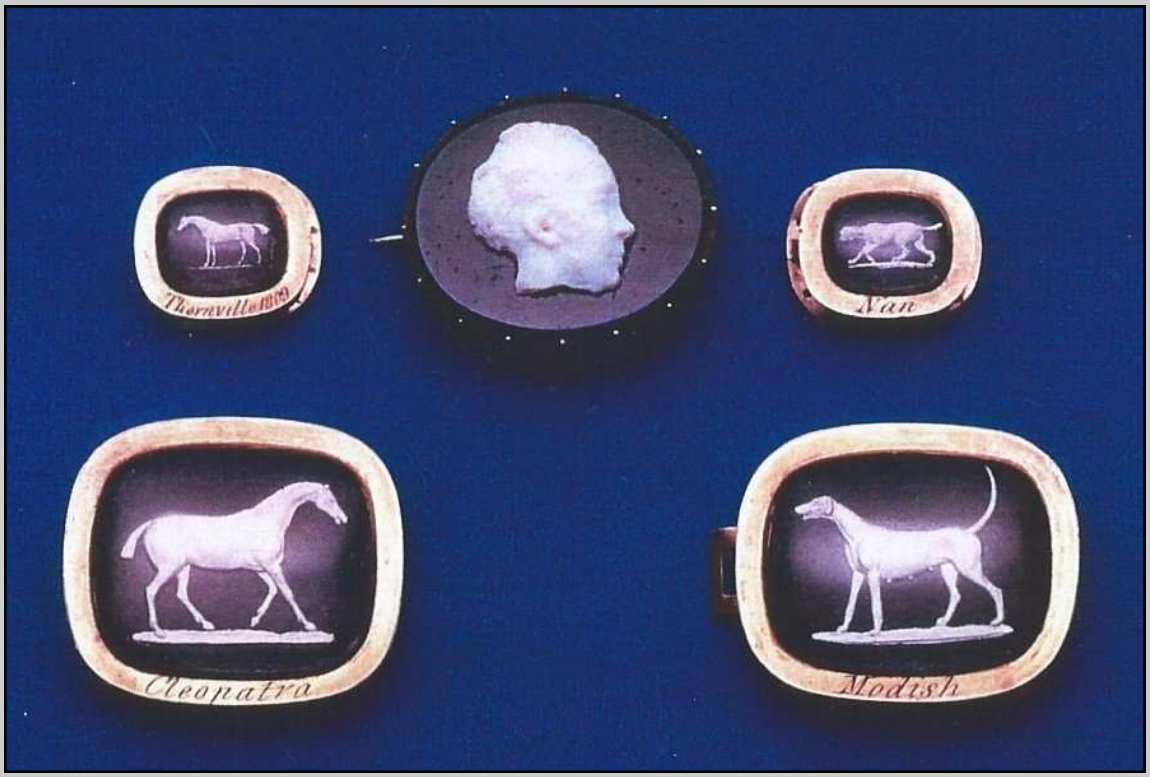
Miniature Enamels

Charles Towne ***Colonel Thornton's Pointers, Pluto and Juno***
This a small enamel on copper (11 x 13 cm) which sold at a Bonhams, The Chester Sale March 16, 2011 as Lot 443 and sold for $2,120 USD.



Jean-Louis Richter ***A Gold and Enamel Snuff Box*** 1792-1801
The image is drawn from the falconry scene with Colonel Thornton heron hawking. It was likely commissioned by him and taken from the engraving rather than the original painting as the falconer is facing right as in the engraving. It measures 3.5 inches wide. This was offered at auction by Sotheby's on December 7th, 2010 as Lot 37. However records do not indicate its sale.

Miniature Jewelry



Private Collection

Private Collection

Sporting Buttons
Designed for the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain in two sizes for both the jacket and sleeves.
Courtesy:Patrick Morel

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal

Front View of Thornville Royal

Anticipating the death of King George III, the Duke of York and his brother the Prince of Wales and future King George IV set out to make it an establishment worthy of its royal occupants by hiring noted architect Henry Holland. However, the King recovered and the Duke of York sold the estate to Colonel Thornton for £110,000 who renamed it "Thornville" after his family estate "Old Thornville" and added "Royal" with the permission of the Prince of Wales. Over the next 16 years he set out to rebuild, refurbish and expand this famous sporting establishment. He retained many of the workmen hired by the Duke in order to complete the renovations and in addition he hired the well known architect John Plaw to design new farm buildings, hunting gates, and dog kennels. The Duke of York had constructed their mansion in the Georgian style of the period and it was beautifully depicted in The Sporting Magazine in November 1807 illustrating the work completed by Colonel Thornton.

The Sporting Magazine also provides a written description accompanying the illustration:
"With respect to the mansion itself, it stands on an eminence at the entrance of the park, and possesses every accommodation, that can be wished; it contains several suites of apartments of extensive dimensions, which are chiefly ornamented with sporting paintings of great celebrity. The library is particularly worthy of remark, as it contains many curiosities, among others, of a sporting nature. The park is beautiful and extensive, well wooded and watered, and contains two fine lakes called the upper and lower lake. It is well stocked with deer, and is embellished with an excellent structure of stone, denominated the Temple of Victory; being situated on an eminence, it commands an extensive view over the park and adjacent country. The dog kennel, erected at a short distance from the house, is very commodious. The stables are extensive, and furnished with every necessary convenience. Thornville has other out buildings necessary for an establishment of that description, among which the hawk houses are particularly worthy of notice. They form a convenient structure, purposely erected for the accommodation of these birds, the late proprietor having for many years followed the sport of hawking with extraordinary enthusiasm."

Engraving: *A Sporting Tour of France in the Year 1802, 1806.*

Colonel Thornton's Residences

Colonel Thornton Held Court
in Some of The Most Remarkable
and Well Known Homes in England

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal

Thornville Royal - Yorkshire

This is a small hand colored engraving originally published in *The Sporting Magazine* November 1807. The Colonel had already left Thornville Royal in January 1806.

Allerton Mauleverer

Colonel Thornton sold Thornville Royal in late 1805 to Lord Stourton who began the construction of a new home in 1848 under the direction of architect George Martin. The house was completed four years later. The only structure remaining from the original house was the dining room which is now called the Chapel Room and incorporated into the chapel. In 1983, Dr. Gerald Arthur Rolph purchased the house, the Temple of Victory and the immediate grounds. He has established a foundation for the restoration and preservation of Allerton Castle.

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal

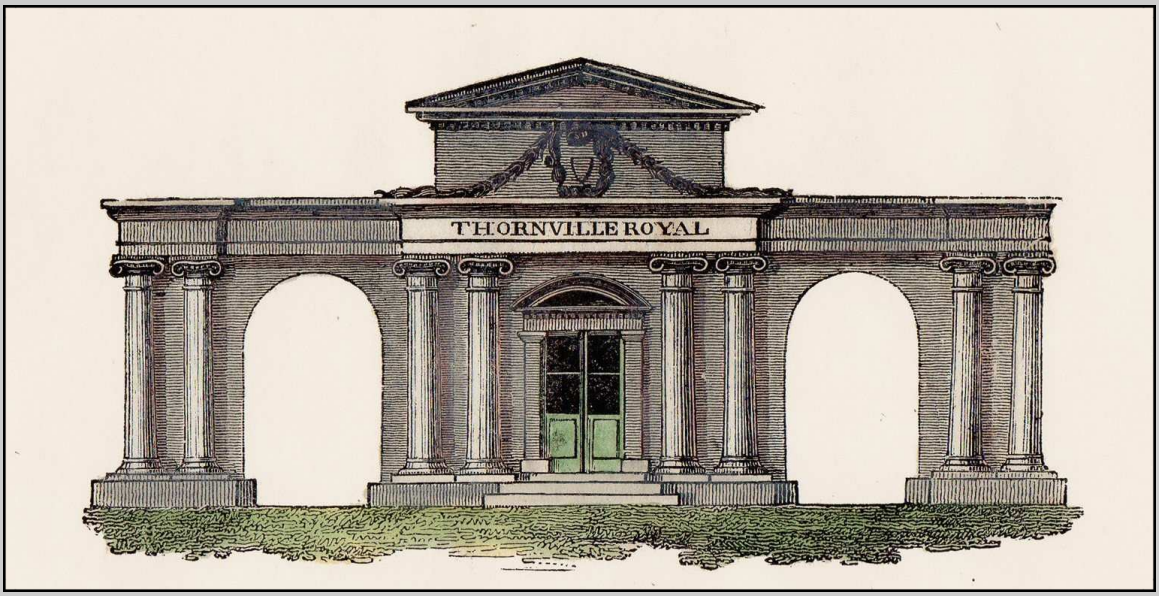
Temple of Victory-1806

The Temple of Victory was a major focal point at Thornville Royal located to the west of the main house reportedly built on a hill from materials hauled up the hill by the 10,000 men of The Grand Duke of York.
Source: *A Sporting Tour of France in 1802, 1806*

Temple of Victory - 2013

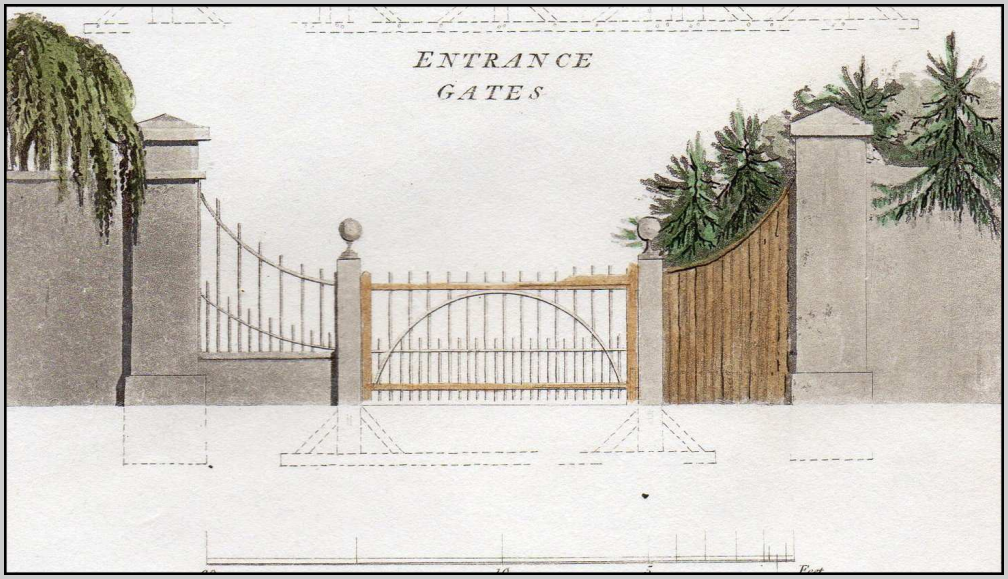
The Colonel flew his immature peregrine falcons "at hack" from this isolated vantage point on the estate.
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal



Planned Entrance to Thornville Royal

This drawing appeared in Colonel Thornton's *A Sporting Tour Through France in 1802* and illustrates the proposed new entrance which appears to have only been a dream as there is no indication it was ever built.



John Plaw ***Entrance gates to the Farm Yard*** 1791

John Plaw, a noted designer of rural buildings was hired to design gates, dog kennels, and farm buildings just two years after Thornton took possession of Thornville from the Duke of York. He was establishing himself as hunting royalty with the most modern well designed facilities ever seen in the sporting world. It is unknown if everything designed was built as none remains today. Plaw indicates that this gate design often incorporated a smaller walking gate for pedestrians.

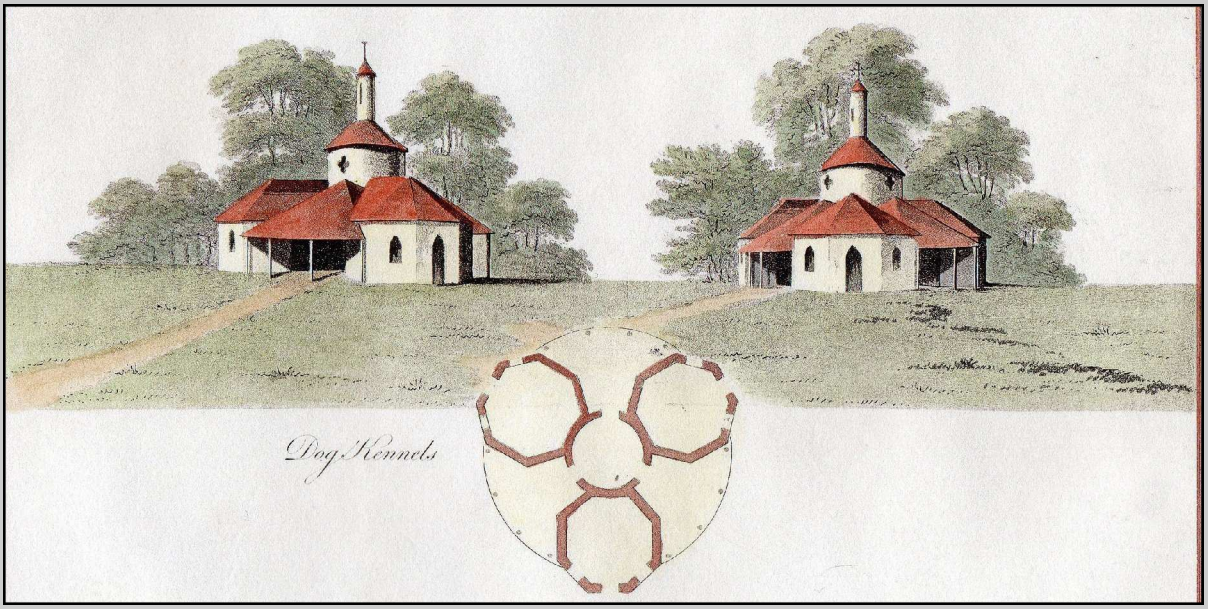
Ferme Ornée, or, Rural improvements by John Plaw -1796

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal

John Plaw ***Hunting Gate and Field Gate*** 1793

Plaw indicated that letters on these gates "T" and "M" are painted a different color from the gate to indicate which hunt they belonged to as well as the extent of the proprietor's domain. These gates were designed simultaneously for Colonel Thomas Thornton "T" and John Morant "M."

Ferme Ornée, or, Rural improvements by John Plaw -1796



John Plaw ***Dog Kennels*** 1791

Colonel Thornton possessed dogs and hounds of nearly every sporting breed and in numbers to insure a successful hunt. It is doubtful that only one of these buildings was built as several would be needed to house the dozens or perhaps hundreds of dogs he bred and cared for.

Ferme Ornée, or, Rural improvements by John Plaw -1796

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal

Library at Thornville Royal

This plate is from *A Sporting Tour of France in 1802*. Note the variety of sporting paraphernalia and art throughout the room. The hunting horn on the left wall is made of ivory with silver inlay.

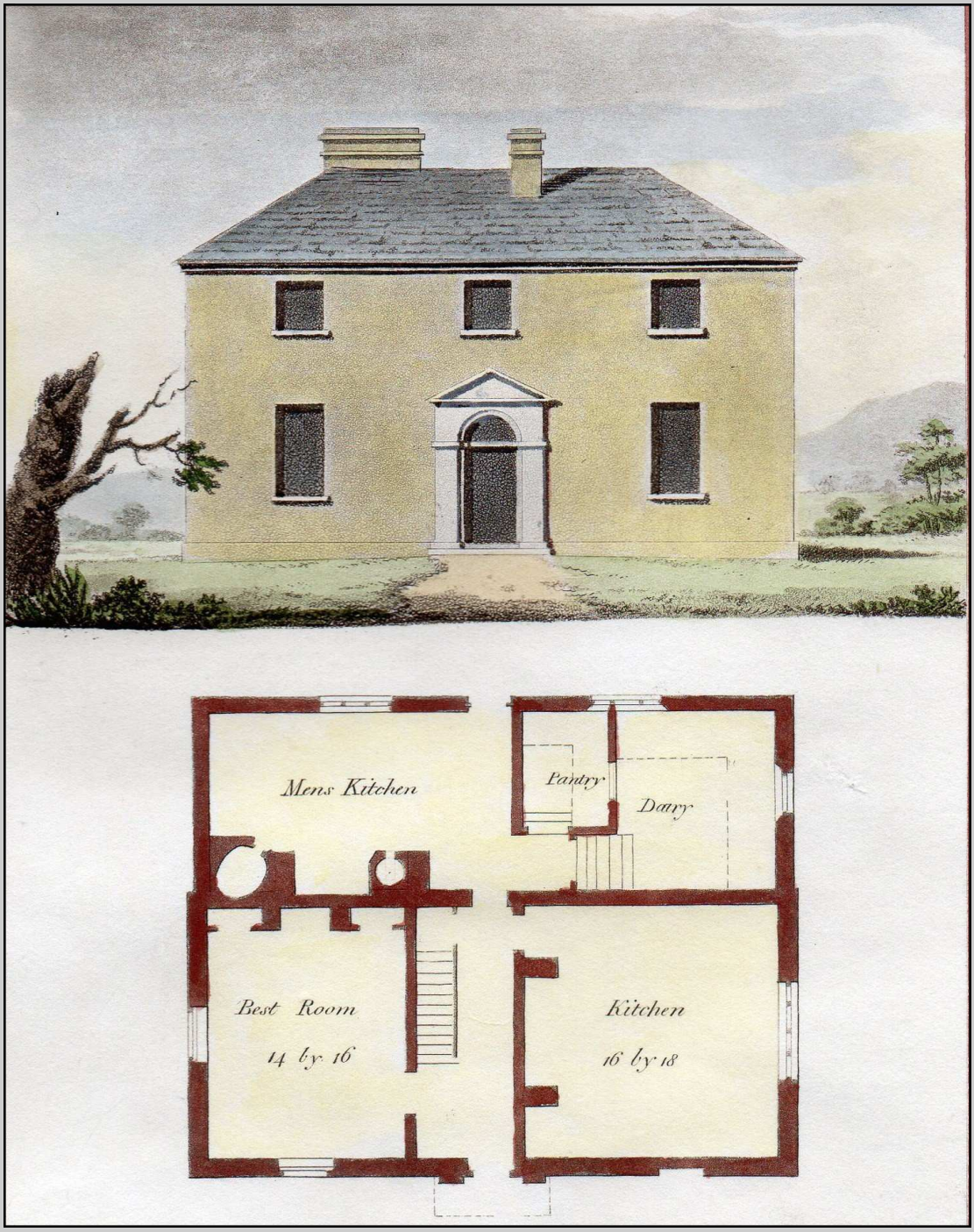
Source: *A Sporting Tour of France in 1802, 1806*

Hawk Houses at Thornville Royal

No expense was spared for the Colonel's favorite field sport.
After his departure these buildings were converted into a dairy.

Source: *A Sporting Tour of France in 1802, 1806*

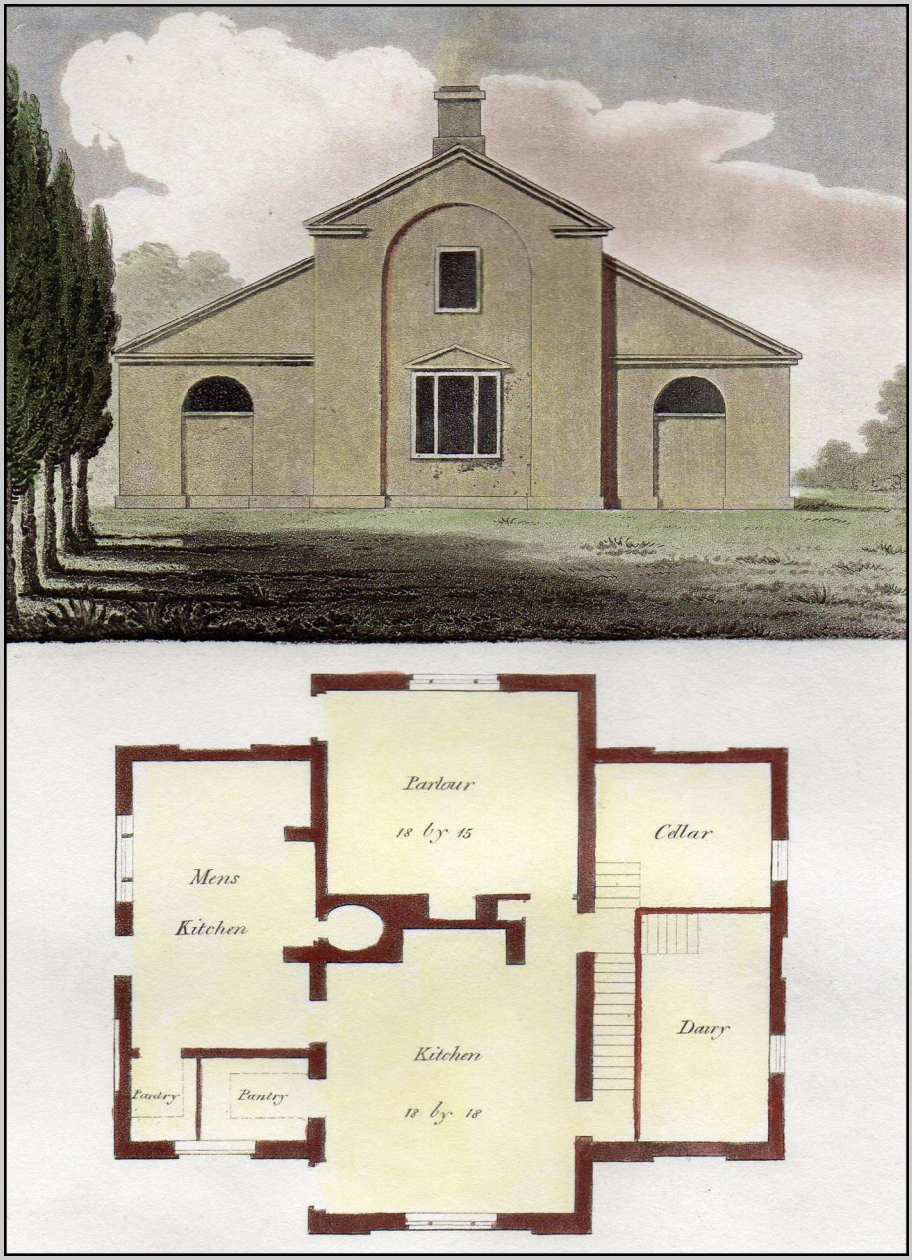
Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal



John Plaw ***A Farm House*** 1793

Plate 24 from *Ferme Ornee* by John Plaw
"This farm house I built for Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton,
on his estate in Yorkshire, on a Large Dairy Farm:
the situation is in a small village."

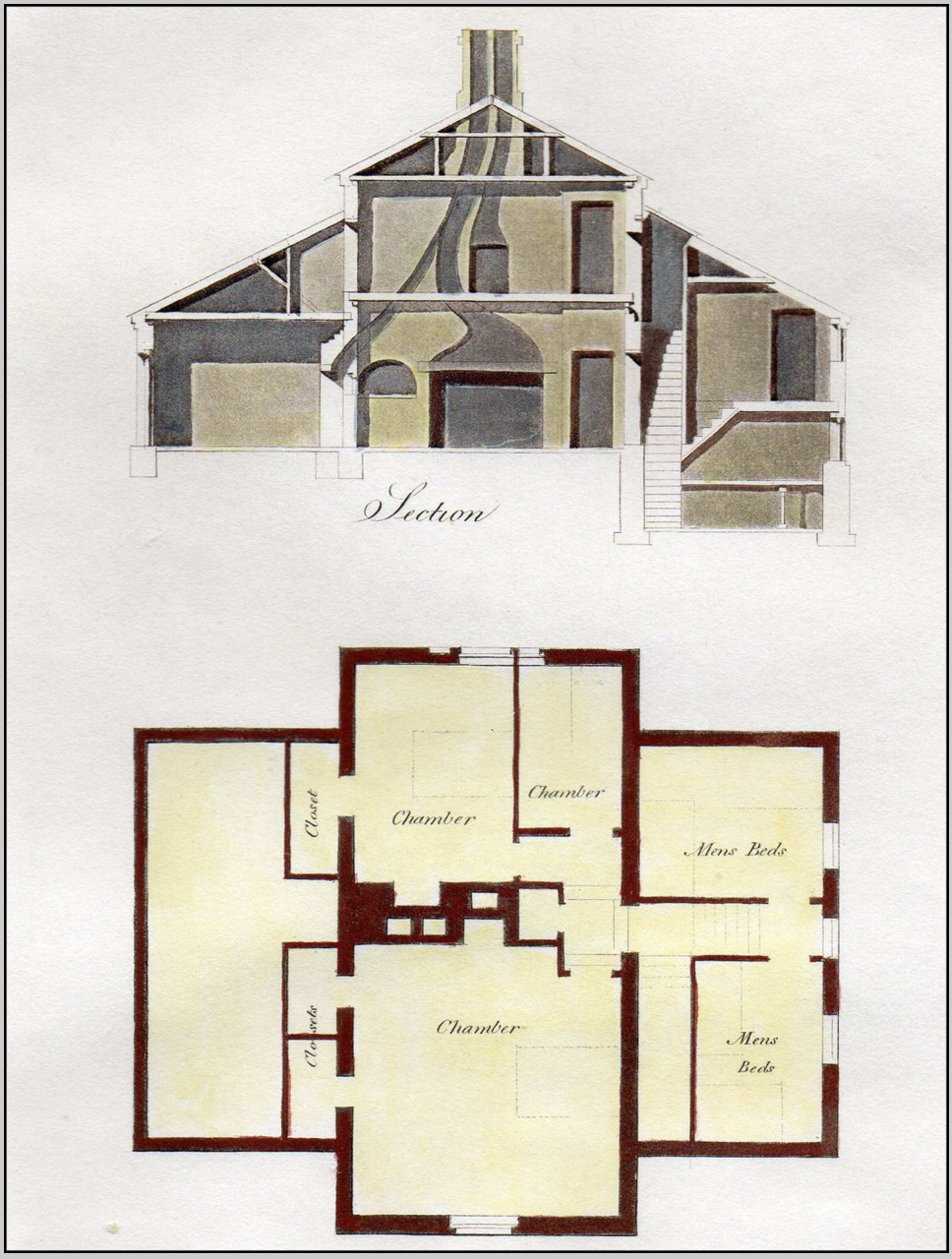
Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal



John Plaw ***A Farm House*** 1793

Plate 25 from *Ferme Ornee* by John Plaw
"Plan and elevation of another farm house, built for Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton, Yorkshire: the front and back are regular facades.
It is seen at a distance from the Boroughbridge road, and from Knaresborough."

Colonel Thornton's Thornville Royal



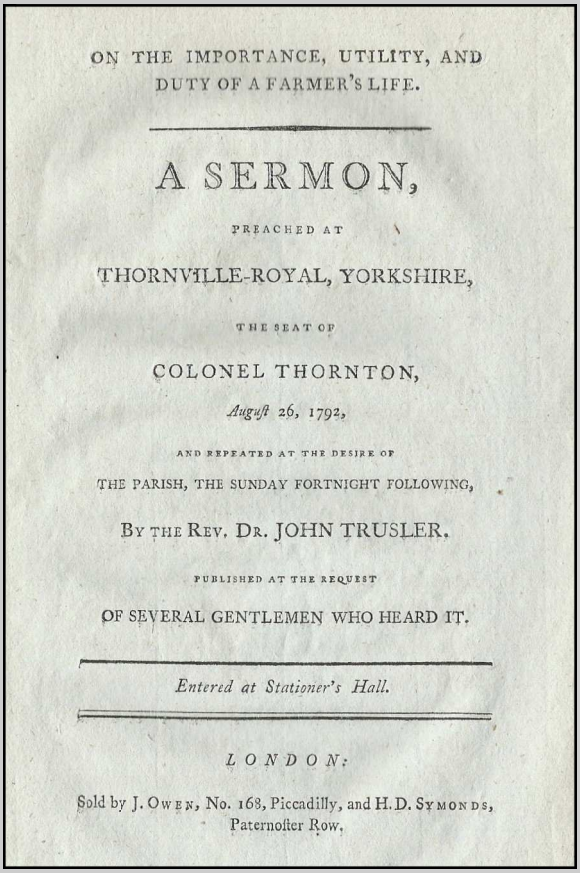
John Plaw ***A Farm House*** 1793

Section and chamber plan

Plate 26 from *Ferme Ornee* by John Plaw

"By consulting the section and the plans, the distribution of the apartments in this dwelling will, I think, appear to contain all the conveniences requisite in such a building for a respectable farmer and a numerous Family. As this design has been carried to execution, I am better ready to recommend the economy of the plan, the dairy is sunk, which in Yorkshire is considered as very advantageous."

Sermon at St. Martin's Church at Thornville Royal- 1792



ON THE IMPORTANCE, UTILITY, AND DUTY OF A FARMER'S LIFE.

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THORNVILLE-ROYAL, YORKSHIRE,

THE SEAT OF

COLONEL THORNTON,

August 26, 1792,

AND REPEATED AT THE DESIRE OF

THE PARISH, THE SUNDAY FORTNIGHT FOLLOWING,

BY THE REV. DR. JOHN TRUSLER.

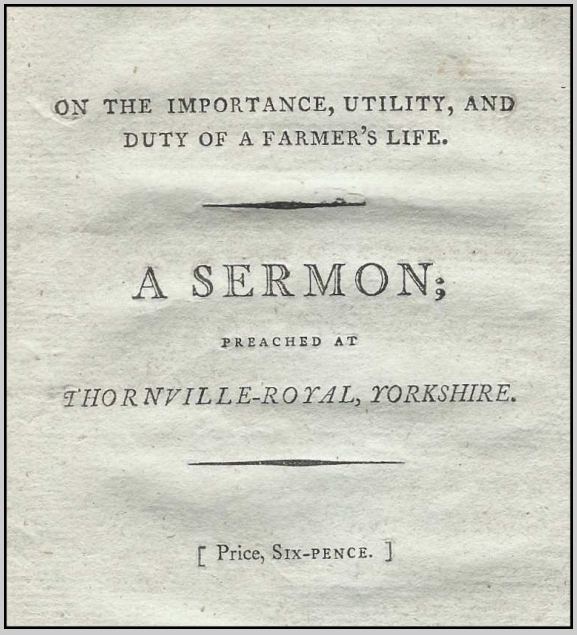
PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST

OF SEVERAL GENTLEMEN WHO HEARD IT.

Entered at Stationer's Hall.

LONDON:

Sold by J. OWEN, No. 168, Piccadilly, and H. D. SYMONDS, Paternoster Row.



ON THE IMPORTANCE, UTILITY, AND DUTY OF A FARMER'S LIFE.

A SERMON;

PREACHED AT

THORNVILLE-ROYAL, YORKSHIRE.

[Price, SIX-PENCE.]

John Trusler (1735–1820) was born in London in July 1735. In his tenth year he was sent to Westminster school, and at the age of fifteen he was transferred to Mr. Fountaine's seminary at Marylebone. Then he proceeded to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1757.

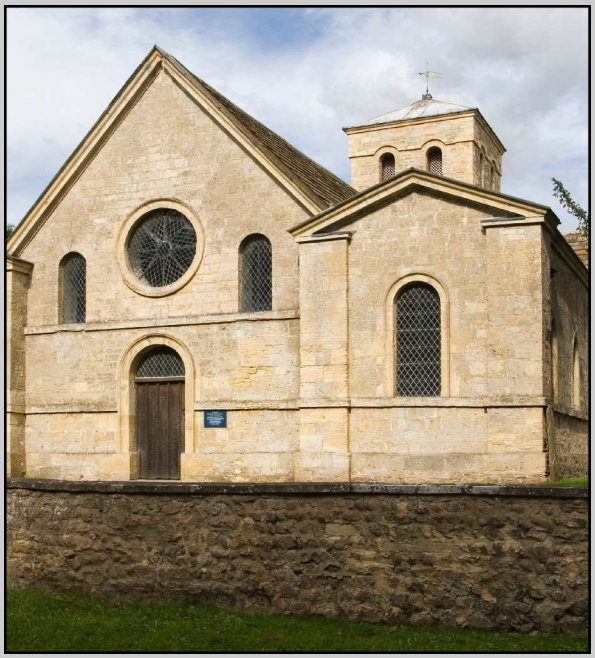
In 1759 Trusler took holy orders and became a priest. In 1769 he sent circulars to every parish in England and Ireland proposing to print in script type, an imitation of handwriting, about a hundred and fifty sermons at the price of one shilling each, in order to save the clergy both study and the trouble of transcribing. This ingenious scheme appears to have met with considerable success.

The sermon which extolled the virtues of the farmer and the importance of the sportsman to the economic prosperity of the community must have pleased Colonel Thornton as he had copies printed. He had purchased Falconer's Hall in Baythorpe in the Wolds (wilds) due to the expansion of farming in the immediate vicinity of Thornville Royal.

St. Martin's Church at Thornville Royal

View From the Road
A field of rape seed.
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

View From the Cemetery
No Thorntons are buried in the cemetery.
Photo: Stephen Hipperson



The Front Door
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

The Main Aisle
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

St. Martin's Church at Thornville Royal

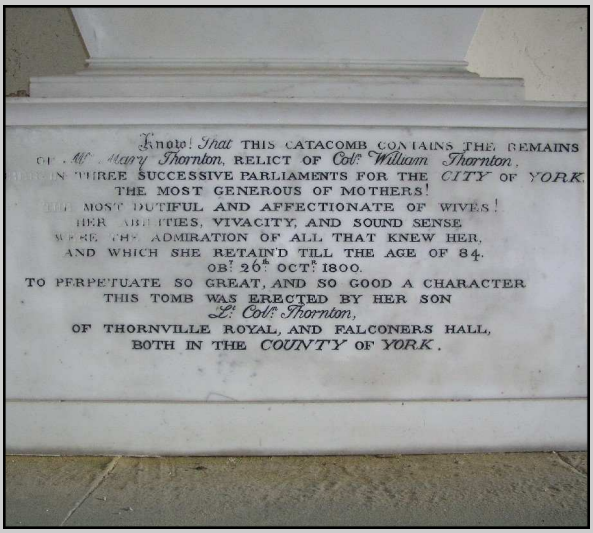
13th-14th Century Wooden Knight Effigies
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

Alabaster Effigies of the Mauleverers
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

Mary Thornton's Tomb View From the Aisle
Photo: Stephen Hipperson

Know! That THIS CATACOMB CONTAINS THE REMAINS
RELICT OF Colo William Thornton,
IN THREE SUCCESSIVE PARLIAMENTS FOR THE CITY OF YORK.
THE MOST GENEROUS OF MOTHERS!
MOST DUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE OF WIVES!
HER ABILITIES, VIVACITY, AND SOUND SENSE
WERE THE ADMIRATION OF ALL THAT KNEW HER,
AND WHICH SHE RETAIN'D TILL THE AGE OF 84.
OBt 26th OCTr 1800.
TO PERPETUATE SO GREAT, AND SO GOOD A CHARACTER
THIS TOMB WAS ERECTED BY HER SON
Lt Colo Thornton,
OF THORNVILLE ROYAL, AND FALCONERS HALL,
BOTH IN THE COUNTY OF YORK.

The Complete Tomb
Photo: Stephen Hipperson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The Inscription
Photo: John Swift

Colonel Thornton's Departure to Spye Park

Interpretation of Colonel Thornton's Move to Spye Park by Miss Ninetta Butterworth
A Hunt around the Highlands by Michael Brander

"By 1808 he had parted with Falconer's Hall as well and had taken a lease of Spye Park in Wiltshire. His arrival at his new home provided him with a wonderful opportunity for "astonishing the natives" with a spectacular demonstration, one after his own heart and such a one as rural Wiltshire never saw before or since.

The procession, which arrived at Spye, designed to impress West Country folk with the magnificence of the Thortonian establishment, was like nothing so much as a preview of the oddest circus ever seen. It was led by a huge vehicle known as the boat-waggon, formerly used for taking regiments of Yorkshire voters to the poll.

This was packed with dogs, luggage, guns, rods, otterspears and sporting gear generally, draped with the skins of stags, roebucks, and large game killed by its owner, and drawn by four cream coloured Arab horses of Royal breeding. There followed a dog-cart load of terriers in clothing embroidered with records of their triumphs: then the huntsman and his whippers in charge of a mixed pack of one hundred couples of foxhounds, staghounds, otterhounds and beagles.

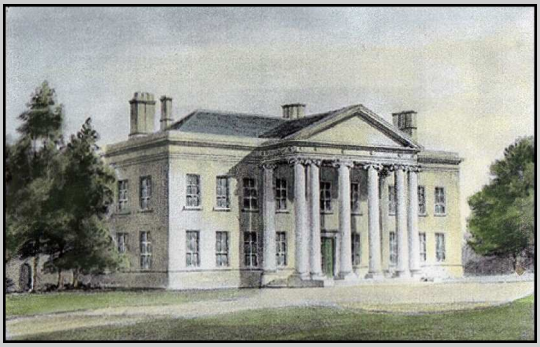
Next in order came a string of thoroughbred horses, each led by a groom leading the renowned Thornton pointers: a green and silver clad falconer in charge of various hawks and a brace of cormorants broke to fish hunting; and a *gard chasse* with two brace of wild boars, said to have been a gift to the Colonel from Napoleon.

The rear was brought up by a line of waggons, loaded various with red deer, roebuck, Asiatic deer, white Muscovy ducks, ferrets and other animals, to say nothing of the Thornville collection of works of art and old master paintings and a large collection of exotic house plants. Finally there were nine wagons of vintage wine and ale.

As he advanced in years, Thornton's taste seems to have strayed farther and farther from legitimate sport toward all that was sensational and fantastic. His years at Spye were marked by such absurdities as hunting a white buck with bloodhounds; the quarry when killed by accident being given funeral honors."

Old Sporting Characters by Hugh McCausland, 1948

Colonel Thornton's Departure to Spye Park



Bayntun House in Spye Park
Colonel Thornton occupied this home for nine years and replaced many of the Bayntun portraits . with those of his own choosing.

Bradley Manor in Wiltshire
Utilized by Colonel Thornton for sporting activities.

A Dark Bay Hunter Jumping a Fence,
with a huntsman in the grounds of Spye park.
Henry Bernard Chalon 1815
Commissioned by Colonel Thomas Thornton

Letter from William, (Lascelles) at Wetherby in Yorkshire, to his friend Peter in London.

Dear Coz.—Though my letters you kindly peruse,
And tho' frequent I write, still keep asking for news;
What news so afflictive, so dire can I tell,
As that which our county so lately befel ?
O dismal the story, and sad to remark,
That Yorkshire has lost what is gain'd by Spy Park.
Colonel Thornton is gone ! a more elegant youth,
More justly renown'd for fair dealing and truth,
With candour and courage superior to both,
And so very exact that his word was an oath.
Colonel Thornton is gone! and our grief is past shewing,
And all I can add is—the mode of his going;
Which form'd as he left us, a grand cavalcade,
A kind of a mountebank harliquinade.
But that the procession we duly may quote,
What first struck the eye was the *wonderful boat.*
That boat by a magical kind of direction,
Which turn'd the whole tide of the Yorkshire election,
Now appeared like gilt gingerbread, seen at our fairs,
Drawn in trappings of gold by four cream-colour'd mares ;
And a breed more imperial no sportsman e'er hit on,
For he says they were got by the *King of Great Britain !*
At the top all the game was display'd as a show,
Which at times had been killed by the Colonel's *long bow,*
While across the boat-waggon, by way of a hint,
Lay the whip of that hard-hearted horse-whipping *Flinty*
Which seemed in low voice, to address the beholders—
"My sweet Colonel I'm here, so take care of your shoulders."
The *hounds* follow'd next, of each size and dimension,
Which in fact could be raised or supposed by invention;
Lapdog-beagles, white terriers; and dress'd in gold stuff,
Two greyhounds came next—*Braggadocio* and *Puff,*
With lists round their necks of the prizes, they won,
Obtain'd in great matches they never had run.
On a grey, the *head huntsman* his figure display'd,
Riding airy and light with his wages unpaid;
While close at his heels, like a minikin pin,
On a small pocket poney—a bag whipper-in.
Then follow'd nine waggons, with treasure divine,
Design'd for immortals—superlative wine!
But the merits of each in two words may be told,
The waggons and wine were an hundred years old!
Then, neatly arranged in due order each cork,
Which at *Thornville* was drawn by his *Highness* of *York.*
Who swore from such bottles he never would wince,
For the wine and the Colonel were treats for a Prince.
The *falconer* came last, with his hawks in array,
Like their master prepared to make all things their prey,
For things that we know wc can easily teach,
And a pigeon, they say, is convenient to each.
In short, my dear Cousin, no words can describe
The exit he made for himself and his tribe;
But he's gone! this most excellent- youth is departed,
And his friends and his tradesmen are all broken hearted.
One sentiment strongly on each seems impress'd,
As he rose in the east may he set in the west.

Kenyon House

Lord Kenyon
© Trustees of the British Museum

Lincoln's Inn Fields

Kenyon House
Number 35 is now part of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Colonel Thornton purchased Kenyon House in Lincoln's Inn Fields in London in 1806 after leaving Thornville Royal and occupying Falconer's Hall in Yorkshire. The Colonel's finances were greatly improved when he legally married a wealthy heiress named Eliza Cawston of Munden, Essex on July 23, 1806.

George Ellers visited the Colonel as a young 28 year man traveling throughout Yorkshire. He provides some insight into the Colonel with comments in his letters *Memoirs of George Ellers*: "He was a very extraordinary man; he could sit up drinking night after night and sleep in a chair instead of going to bed then get on his horse and hunt all day." After Falconer's Hall he traveled to London and visited the Colonel at Kenyon House where he comments: "Colonel Thornton had at this time very serious thoughts of taking unto himself a wife, and, as chance would have it, I was the indirect means of his obtaining one."

"At this time he had an immense old-fashioned house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, once the property of Lord Kenyon. This he had purchased and filled with valuable paintings by old and modern masters. He had his horses, carriages, and servants in town, and he had another large house called Dorset House near Manchester Square, and a small house near Astley's Theatre, which he called 'The Boudoir'. At his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields he gave bad dinners but plenty of good wine. I used generally to dine there four days out of the seven, and there I met all sorts of people, consisting of actors, authors, painters, musicians, peers, boxers, poets, etc. Of the former I have met Kelly, Incledon, Munden, etc.; Bowden, Reynolds, etc.; Ashley, Attwood, etc.; Peter Pindar, Lord Scarborough, Lord Coleraine (the celebrated George Hanger); Major Wilson, afterwards Lord Berners; Daniel Mendoza; Messrs. Wichelo, Reinagle, Barrett, and Morland, these last celebrated painters, and a variety of others. What scenes of fun, wit, and humour I have witnessed at these parties! I have not enumerated one-half of them, and there are now very few alive that used 'to set the table in a roar."

-Memoirs of George Ellers-

Colonel Thornton's London Social Clubs

Astley's Theatre

Savoir Vivre Club

The Sporting Magazine of 1808 writes:
"Kenyon-house.—Col. Thornton's dinner at Kenyon-House, on Wednesday, the 8th instant, given in honour of the soldiers of the York, was conducted in the style of old English hospitality. The matchless service of plate, given by them for his services, &c. was, of course displayed; and after dinner the gold cup was filled with champagne and red constantia, when the following toasts were drank:—
The Soldiers of the York; of them more hereafter: with three times three cheers.—-The King, and long may he reign. — The Prince, and may the late wise regulations at Carlton-House prove a lesson to be followed by the rest of the Royal Family,—May hemp bind those whom honour cannot.— The immortal patron of patriotism and virtue, Charles Watson Wentworth, late Marquis of Rockingham. —*Sir George Savile.—Honest John, afterwards Ensign Smith, &c.—May the House of Commons divest themselves from party differences, and attend only to the good of the nation.—To the memory of that man who first planned, and brought into Parliament, the Militia Bill: with three times three.—Lord Milton and his plumpers.—*The Marchioness of Lansdown—*The Ladies of Devonshire and Somersetshire.—Colonel Wardle.—Lord Folkstone.—Mr. Whibread.—Mr. Wynne, and all the virtuous Members of the House of Commons.—Liberty without licentiousness. After a few songs—Falconry, the Sports of the' Field, &c. The watchman's hollow voice broke up the party at an early hour. Notes are also provided about:

-*Sir George Savile: And may that statue of his, proposed by Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton, and ordered by the county of York to be sculptured, never decay, and prove an incentive to the rising generation to be *great* and *free.*

-*The Marchioness of Lansdown: From whom the Colonel received a. most superb set of gold embossed buttons, worn with the soldiers' medallion on this day.

-*The Ladies of Devonshire: The ladies who attended the Colonel's court-martial, and presented him with a medallion, and gave balls, &c. *sec."*

Sporting Guns

Colonel Thornton Owned the Finest Guns
from The Most Well Known Gun Makers

Scene in the Highlands of Scotland

George Garrard ***Colonel Thornton Hunting Grouse on the Scottish Moors with His Pointers***
1784
Daniel's Rural Sports **1801.**

Colonel Thornton's Twelve Barrel Volley Rifle

Reinagle (portrait) Gilpin (background and dog). *ca. 1786*

Colonel Thornton, Marquess Dupont, Roebuck Shooting in the Forest of Glenmore with His Twelve Barrel Volley Rifle

Sold at Bonhams, Sydney June 26th, 2010, Lot 1233 for $325,000 USD.

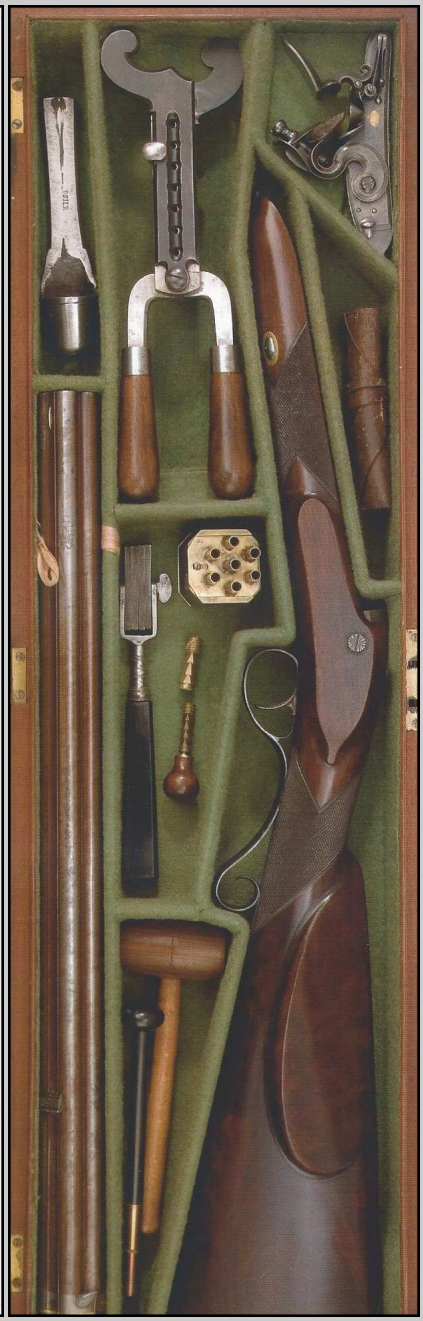
Colonel Thomas Thornton-Sporting Apparatus

Sporting Apparatus

A. Three-barreled pistol, presented to the First Consul by the author.
B. Sporting-case, which contains a fowling piece, shot bag, bottle and cup (marked M)
C. Case for gun-barrels, carried as the before-mentioned articles.
D. Fourteen-barreled gun, of very superior workmanship, and remarkably light.
G. Shot-case, made from a piece of double-barreled gun, and is extremely convenient.
H. Patent shot-moulds.
I. Powder and shot-case.

"Indeed, it may be fairly presumed, that the author possesses a greater quantity of sporting apparatus of the most valuable and curious manufacture than any other sporting gentleman in England; as he has been at a very considerable expense, and spent a great portion of time and pains in the accomplishment of this desirable end."
Source: *A Sporting Tour of France in 1802, 1806*

Colonel Thornton's Seven Barrel Volley Gun By Nock



The seven barrel volley gun was invented in 1779 and is named after Henry Nock who was contracted to produce it for the British Navy for use in the Napoleonic Wars. It was designed for clearing the enemies ship decks during ship to ship engagements. It proved too powerful for the midshipmen so it was discontinued as a naval weapon. It became one of the Colonel's favorite sporting weapons as he could load 3 balls into each barrel producing 21 balls of shot each firing.
Colonel Thornton made the following comment about double barrel guns:

"I look upon all double-barreled guns as trifles, rather nick-nacks than useful."

He would continue to develop and expand the use of multi-barrel guns.

Colonel Thornton's Seven Barrel Volley Gun By Nock

The Flintlock Firing Mechanism

The Front View Illustrating the Arrangement of Each Barrel

Colonel Thornton's Seven Barrel Volley Gun By Nock

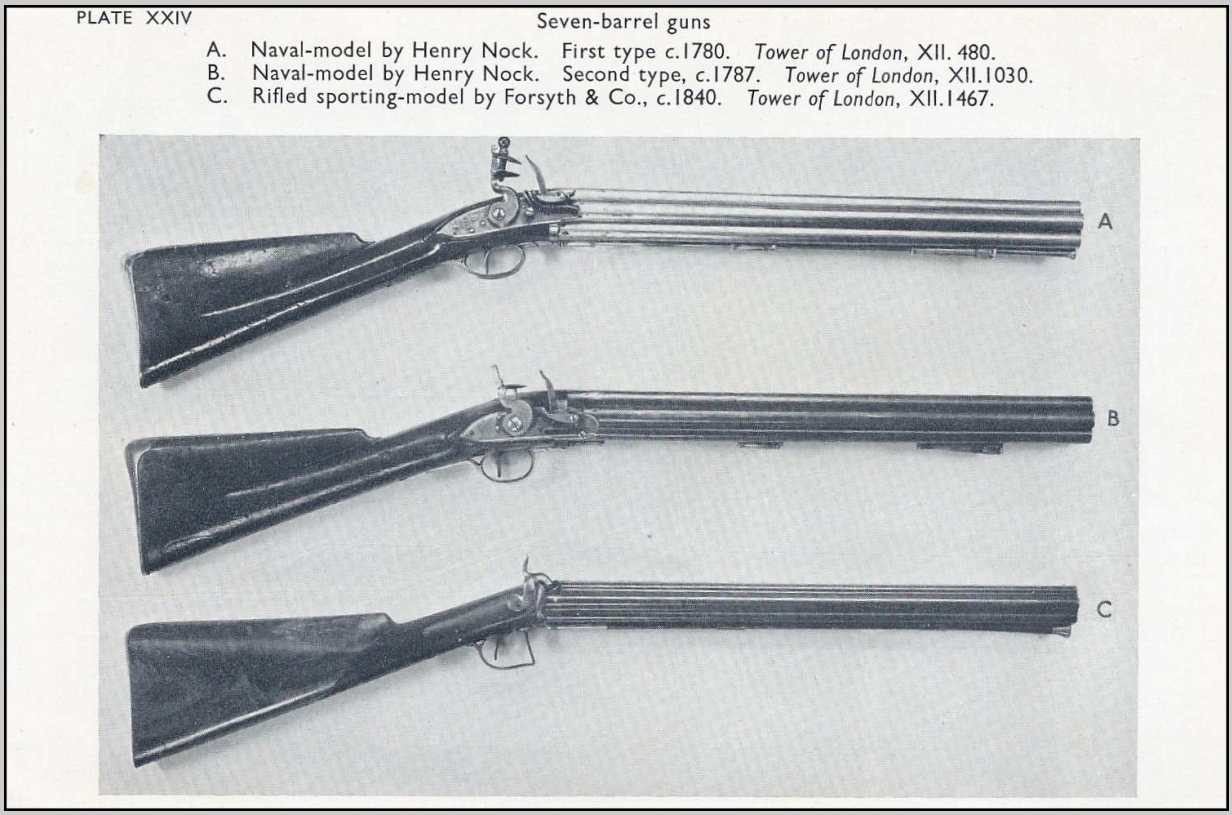


PLATE XXIV
Seven-barrel guns
A. Naval-model by Henry Nock. First type c.1780. Tower of London, XII. 480.
B. Naval-model by Henry Nock. Second type, c.1787. Tower of London, XII.1030.
C. Rifled sporting-model by Forsyth & Co., c.1840. Tower of London, XII.1467.
A
B
C

Colonel Thornton Would have Used the 3rd Model (c)
Photo: *The Journal of Arms and Armour.*

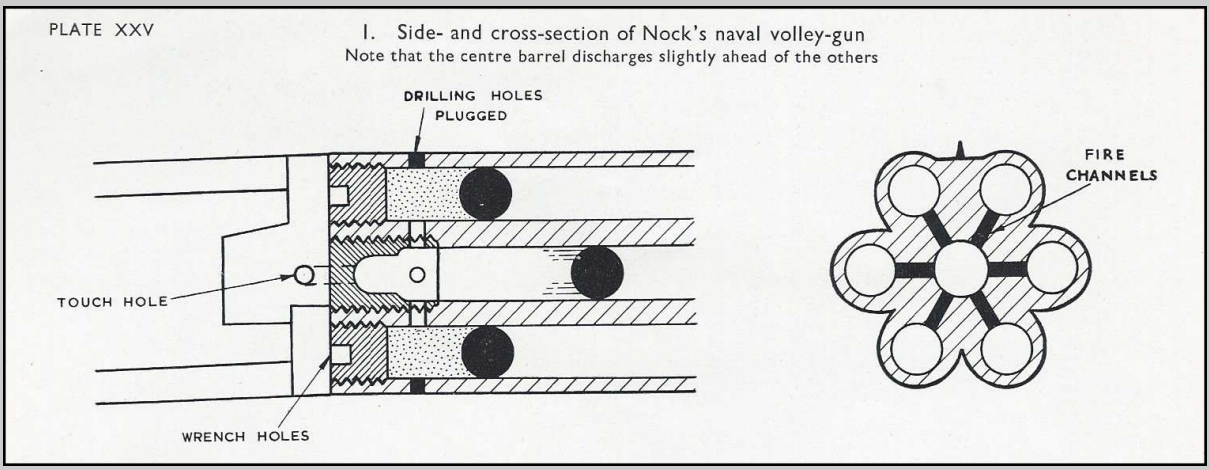


PLATE XXV
I. Side- and cross-section of Nock's naval volley-gun
Note that the centre barrel discharges slightly ahead of the others
DRILLING HOLES PLUGGED
TOUCH HOLE
WRENCH HOLES
FIRE CHANNELS

The Firing Sequence of the Seven Barrel Volley Gun
Photo: *The Journal of Arms and Armour.*

Colonel Thornton's Gift to Napoleon

Right View Illustrating Thornton Coat of Arms

Sporting Tour of France in 1802

Colonel Thornton traveled to France for sport as well as to plead his case about his court-martial to Napoleon. He took Alicia Massingham, his mistress, along with much of his sporting accoutrements. He had a special carriage built to transport all of his supplies. He was able to participate in a wolf hunt in which his white terrier *Vixen* distinguished herself. He was able to arrange an audience with Napoleon through his emissaries. Napoleon commented on the medal [The Triumph of Truth] given the Colonel by his men after his court-martial. The Colonel explained his feelings on the injustice he felt at the hands of the officers in the Militia. He published his *Sporting Tour of France* in 1806 and for the first time used the mole (the little man in velvet) in his Coat of Arms, apparently indicating his sympathy for the French.

Colonel Thornton's Gift to Napoleon

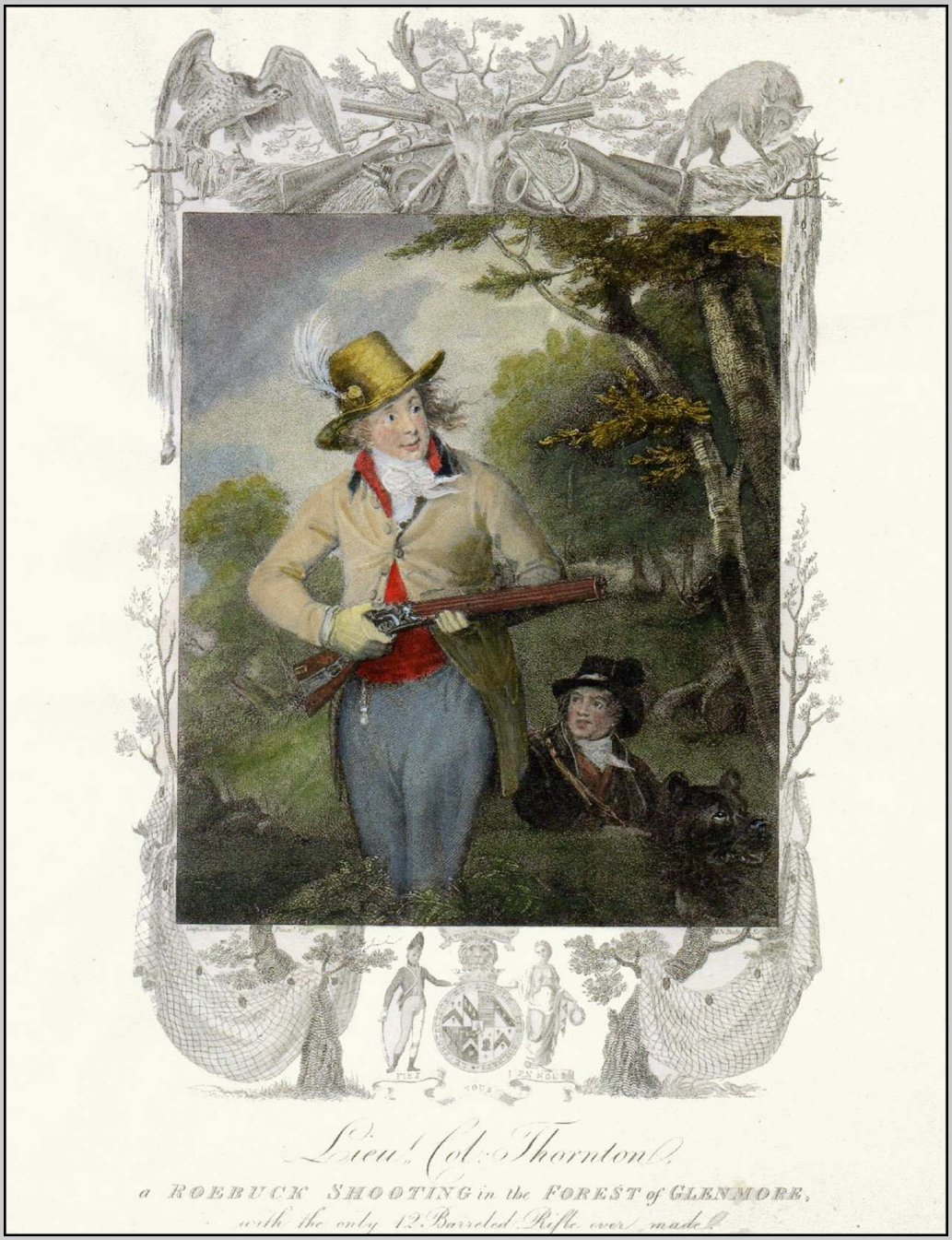
Left View Illustrating "Marengo"

The Battle of Marengo

The Battle of Marengo was fought near the village of Marengo, Italy on June 14th 1800 between Napoleon's French army and the Austrian forces. Napoleon's troops were able to overcome a surprise attack and drive the Austrian forces out of Italy. It solidified Napoleon's position as First Consul of France in spite of an attempted coup just six months earlier.

Bonhams': Arms and Armour, April 6th, 2006 Lot. 396.

Colonel Thornton's 12 Barrel Volley Rifle

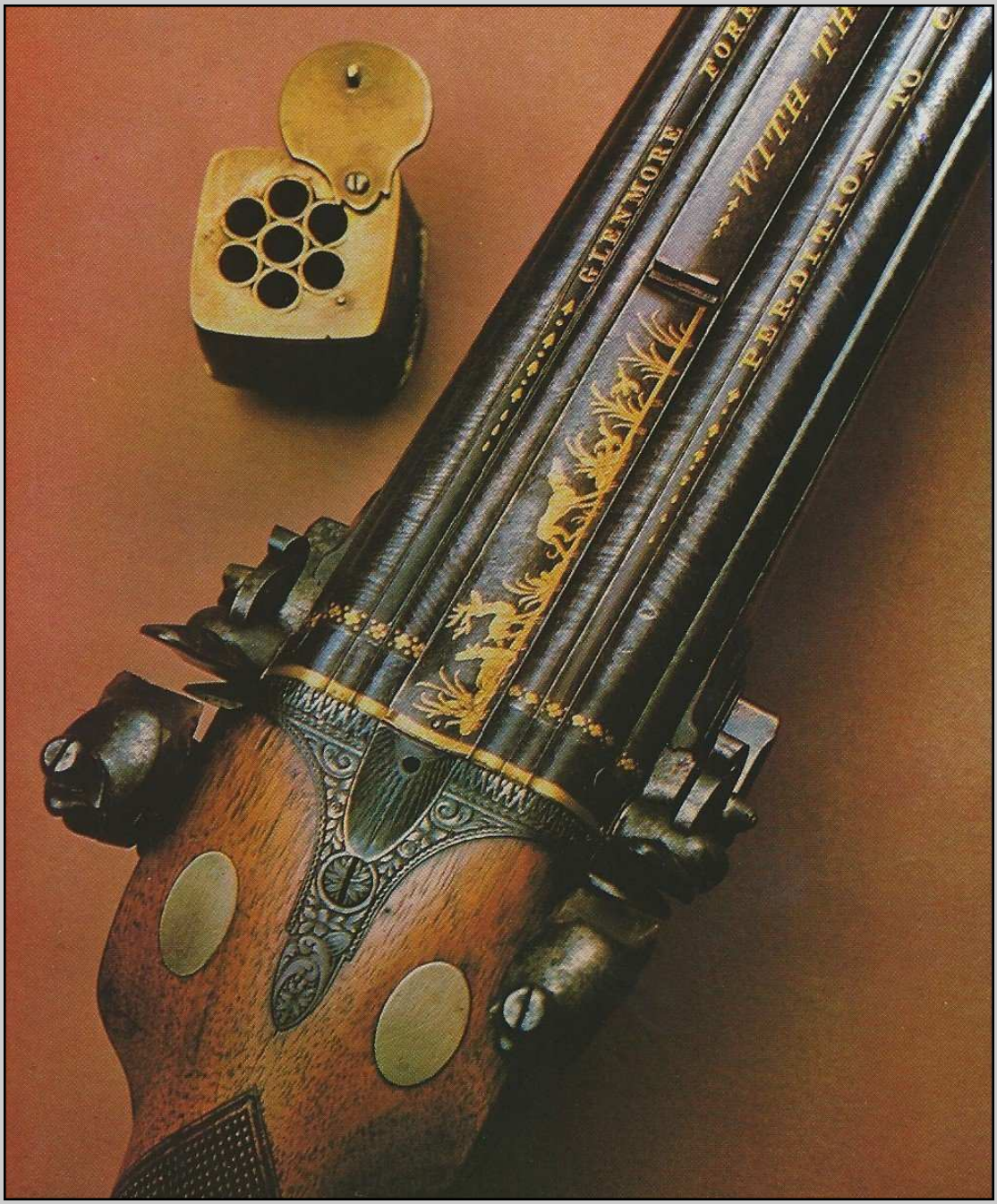


S. Gilpin ***Lieut. Col. Thornton, Roebuck Shooting in the Forest of Glenmore, With the Only 12 Barreled Rifle Ever Made*** 1810 P. Reinagle

Published Nov. 16 1810 by H. Mutlow, Engraver, Russell Court, London

© Trustees of the British Museum

Colonel Thornton's 14 Barrel Volley Gun



Colonel Thornton's 14 Barrel Volley Gun

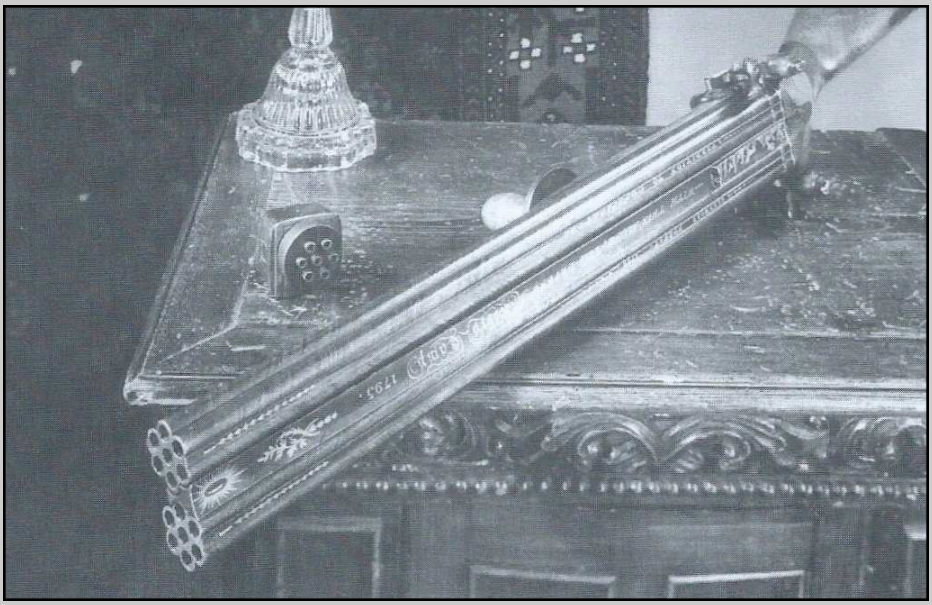
Various Inscriptions

"Dupe and Co., Perdition to Conspiritors, With this alone I'll defend Roborough Camp, 1795."

Each of the 14 barrels has seven flat sides, smooth bore. The bore of each barrel is approximately .30 cal.

Photo:Musée d'Armes in Liege. Belgium

Colonel Thornton's 14 Barrel Volley Gun



Colonel Thornton's 14 Barrel Volley Gun
Musée d'Armes in Liege, Belgium
Photo: Arthur Credland

The 14 Barrel Volley Gun with Supporting Piece
Photo:Musée d'Armes in Liege, Belgium

Colonel Thornton's 14 Barrel Volley Gun

The Double Flintlock Firing Mechanism
Photo:Musée d'Armes in Liege, Belgium

The 14 Barrel Volley Gun Illustrating Barrel Arrangement
Photo:Musée d'Armes in Liege, Belgium

A Type of Airgun Used by Colonel Thornton

Flintlock 38 Bore Air-Gun

This is an example of the flintlock air-gun that Colonel Thornton so heartily endorsed for hunting. No actual air - gun of Colonel Thornton has surfaced in recent years but this is a fine example of the type of air gun he favored.

"Colonel Thornton has introduced among the Northern Sportsmen, a new mode of shooting game and deer with air-rifles. From the success, which has attended this innovation, it is likely to become general in practice. A few days ago a bet was decided at Thornville Royal, that Colonel Thornton would not kill as many head of game by his mode of shooting, as a gentleman of the neighborhood, who is reckoned a very good shot, with a double barrel gun. A great number of sporting men, interested in the event, met on the occasion, and Colonel Thornton won his match. Many woodcocks were killed during the course of the day."

The Sporting Magazine-November, 1801

A Cased Pair of 28-Bore Percussion Pistols

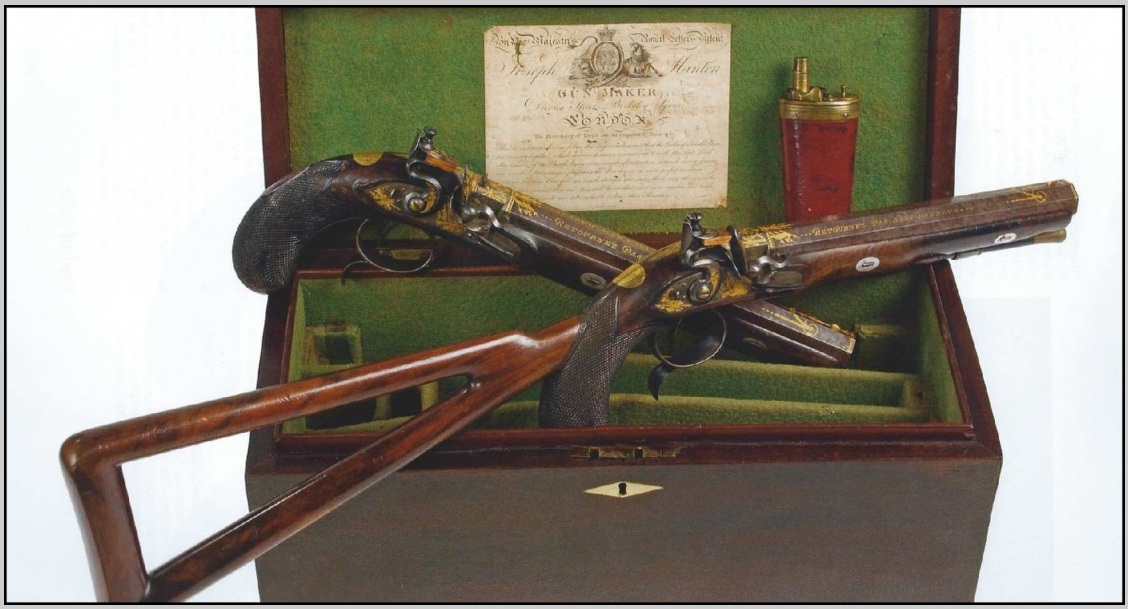
Christie's Auction House October 25th, 2001, London
Fine Antique Firearms from the W. Keith Neal Collection

"A Cased Pair of 28-Bore Percussion Pistols made for Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Thornton by Joseph Manton, London, No. 166, *circa* 1794 with rebrowned twist octagonal sighted barrels signed in gold at the breech and each inlaid with gold scrollwork framing the inscriptions 'Robro/1794', 'Suaviter in modo' (on one) and 'Fortitur in re' (on the other), each of the latter in Gothic characters, silver fore-sights, shaped tangs engraved with martial trophies, detented bevelled locks each with safety-catch and stepped tail, figured walnut full stocks (bruised, one fore-end cracked and chipped), reblued engraved iron mounts including spur trigger-guards each with pineapple finial, silver escutcheons, set triggers, silver barrel-bolt escutcheons, and horn-tipped ramrods, one with worm, the other with powder-measure (iron parts with some rust staining and minor pitting): in lined and fitted brass-bound mahogany case stamped 'Horton', with some accessories including three-way flask covered in red leather, the lid with trade label for *circa* 1810-12, the exterior with angular flush-fitting carrying handle, London proof marks 14.25 in. (36.2cm.)."

The inscriptions on the barrels refer to Roborough Camp, near Plymouth, where a dispute arose between Thornton and some of his officers, leading to the former's court-martial and subsequent resignation. The inscriptions 'Robro/1794' "Suaviter in modo" (on one) "Fortitur in re" (on the other) loosely translates to: "Gentle in Manners", "Firm in Action". Some modern interpretations are: An Iron hand in a Velvet Glove or Walk softly but carry a big stick.

Colonel Thornton's men while at a muster of the West York Militia in Roborough Camp near Plymouth in the South of England decided to have some fun and pulled the Colonel into camp in a carriage. The Colonel was charged with disorderly conduct and a court-martial was held. The Colonel felt the court-martial was conducted with the officers in coordination with the Commander in Chief of the Militias, The Duke of York who was seeking retribution over the sale of Thornville Royal. After a trial, he was sentenced to a public reprimand, which was publicly carried out in front of the entire militia. The Colonel felt this was unwarranted and resigned his commission. His men would later present him with a medal "The Triumph of Truth." He would spend the rest of his life attempting to restore his honor.

Colonel Thornton's Cased Pair of 40-Bore Flintlock Dueling Pistols



Dueling Pistols with Portable Stock for Accuracy
Made For Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Thornton By Joseph Manton, London, No. 568 in 1796.
Sold at Bonhams' on November 30th, 2011, Lot No. 556 for $107,000 USD.

Arrangement in Case to Allow Easy Transport
Bonhams November 30th, 2011, Lot No. 556, 2011

Colonel Thornton's Cased Pair of 40-Bore Flintlock Dueling Pistols

Dueling Pistol with Gold Inlay
Bonhams November 30th, 2011, Lot No. 556, 2011

Colonel Thornton's Coat of Arms
Bonhams November 30th, 2011, Lot No. 556, 2011

Colonel Thornton's Flintlock Rifle

Colonel Thornton's Percussion Rifle "Maria"
Auctioned at Czernys', May 26th, 2013 Lot No. 1194.

Gold Peacock

Engraving

Colonel Thornton's Flintlock Rifle

Gunmaker Joseph Manton's Signature

Close-up of Partial Inscription

"COL. THORNTON – SHOT - WITH – THIS - 27 - DEER – DEAD - on the – SPOT – 9 – THROUGH – the – HEART & the last – FOR – BET – at - 187 - YARDS - 1800"

View of Full Inscription

"COL. THORNTON – SHOT - WITH – THIS - 27 - DEER – DEAD - on the – SPOT – 9 – THROUGH – the – HEART & the last – FOR – BET – at - 187 - YARDS - 1800"

Colonel Thornton's Coach Gun

Colonel Thornton's Coach Gun
Colonel Thornton's Coat of Arms is prominently displayed.

The Detachable Gun Stock
The gun stock is engaged when inserted and twisted a quarter turn.

Colonel Thornton's Coach Gun

Arthur Credland in *Arms and Armour* describes the coach gun

"This half stocked shotgun weighing 5 ½ lbs, overall length 34 ¾ inches., has short barrels, 18 ¾ in. long of 11/16th inch bore, and a detachable butt. There is a rectangular gold poincoin on the surface of each breech; WILSONS- PATENT- LONDON with a crown, and London and the number 1539 are struck on the underside of the breech. On the rib, inlaid in gold, are the inscriptions DEATH and COL. THORNTON 1814 flanked by stylized tendrils. A drainage hole is located between the two inscriptions and a gold bead foresight near the muzzle end." Colonel Thornton's Coat of Arms is prominently displayed on the gun stock."

As with most of Colonel Thorntons guns, this one was designed to break down for easy transport. This weapon appears to have also been designed to be carried while traveling as its shortened barrel would make it easily accessible in the event of attack by bandits.

Credit for the photographs goes to the owner of the gun, Austin C. Carpenter,
and to photographer R. Chapman.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

W. Tate ***Captain Wilkinson*** Eng. H. Hudson

A Portrait of that well known Sportsman, Captain Wilkinson, of the Graftton, with a Gold Cup containing a Fox's Pad.

Sold at the Hickman's Sale as Lot No. 30 on May 11, 1820 and its present location is unknown.

The title of this hand colored engraving: *To the Memory of Andrew Wilkinson, Esq late Captain of his Majesty's Ship the Grafton, done from an Original Picture in the possession of Tho. Thornton Esq of Thornville, and Dedicated by permission to the Members of the HAMMERTON HUNT by their most obliged and obedient Serv. Henry Hudson.* Publication date of this engraving was Oct. 26, 1787.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

Colonel Thornton's Collection of Sporting Art was Renowned Throughout Great Britain

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

CATALOGUE

OF THE

CELEBRATED COLLECTION

OF

Sporting Pictures,

THE PROPERTY OF

COLONEL THORNTON,

FROM

THORNVILLE ROYAL, SPY PARK, AND DULVERTON;

RECENTLY ORNAMENTING

KENYON HOUSE:

UNITING THE TALENTS OF

GILPIN, REINAGLE, BARRETT, AND STUBBS,
MORLAND, ELMER, &c. &c.

Which will be Sold by Auction,

BY

MR. HICKMAN,

AT HIS GALLERY, No. 29, ST. JAMES'S STREET.

On THURSDAY, the 11th of MAY, 1820,

AT ONE O'CLOCK, PRECISELY.

May be Viewed Three Days preceding the Sale, and Catalogues, at One Shilling each, had at the Gallery.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

DRAWINGS, Framed and Glazed.

LOT

13 A beautiful Drawing of a Rose.
14 A ditto, Goldfinches on a Thistle.
15 A Portrait of a Lady in pencil, the face coloured.
16 A beautiful Group of Flowers.
17 A Drawing of three Cherubs' Heads.
18 A pair of exquisite Drawings of Groups of Flowers, by L. Vidal.
19 A Portrait in crayons of a Man blowing through a Glass Tube, J. Russel pinxit, 1785.
20 Two Portraits in crayons of Sterne and Maria, by Russel; said to be the most correct likenesses that were taken.
21 Three beautiful Mosaic Miniatures.
22 .....An Antique Bronze.
23 .....A ditto.
24 Bone .....An Enamel, the Portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds.
25 Shelly .....Eve, a beautiful production of this celebrated artist.
26 .....St. Peter's at Rome, on a cobweb.
27 An unfinished Drawing of Thornville Royal and Park.

PICTURES.

27* Garrard .....A Portrait of the Horse Truth, a known good Hunter.
28 Stubbs .....A Lion and Lioness.
29 Elmer.....A pair, Fish and Game.
30 .....A Portrait of that well known Sportsman, Captain Wilkeson, of the Grafton, with a Gold Cup containing a Fox's Pad.
31 Seymour.....Portrait of the Hampton Court Arabian Horse.
32 P. Rylbrach .....Dead Game.
33 G. Morland .....Portrait of a Pointer of Colonel Thornton's.
34 Dodinges ..... A pair of Heads of Roe-bucks.
35 Barrett and Gilpin ....Two Greyhounds coursing a Hare, with a distant View of Falconers' Hall, one of the Residences of Colonel Thornton.
36 P. Reinagle .....An Iceland Hawk, sans quartier, killing a Hare; engraved.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

LOT

36* HAMILTON, OF ROME ....Lynxes springing on a Stag.

37 G. BARRETT AND GILPIN..Icelander and Thornville, known Racers, and their Dams, by Gilpin; and Brood Mares and Cattle, in a Landscape, by Barrett; with a View of Thornville Park.

38 P. REINAGLE .....Birds baiting an Owl called the Grand Duke.

39 DITTO .....The Foxes; a Litter which were bolted out of a Tree in the Park of Thornville Royal.

40 .....

41 .....

42 .....

43 .. ..

44 ELMER.....Dead Partridges and Woodcocks.

45 A. R. CASTEEL .....Dead Pheasants, Rabbits, and various Birds.

46 HAUGHTON .....Dead Partridges.

47 SNYDERS.....An Eagle devouring a Hare.

48 ELMER..... .A Covey of Partridges in a Landscape.

49 REINAGLE, BARRETT, AND GILPIN .....The going out, from Thornton Castle, near Aveimore, in the Highlands.

50 DITTO .....The Deer Shooters.

51 DITTO .....The Display at the Return at Dulnon Camp, in the Highlands of Scotland. See Colonel T.'s Tour.

52 G. STUBBS .....Portrait of Old Marske, sire of Eclipse; *has been engraved.*

53 G. STUBBS .....Phaeton driving the Horses of the Sun.

54 GILPIN AND G. BARRETT..Portrait of STOIC, a noted Horse of Colonel Thornton's, on whom he for a match caught a Hare, found near Newmarket, by which he won 500 guineas.

54* G. STUBBS .....Portrait of Ambrosio, by Sir Peter.

55 REINAGLE .....Humming Birds and Geraniums.

56 WOOTON.....A grand Hunting Scene, unharbouring a Stag.

57 WEENIX .....Dead Game.

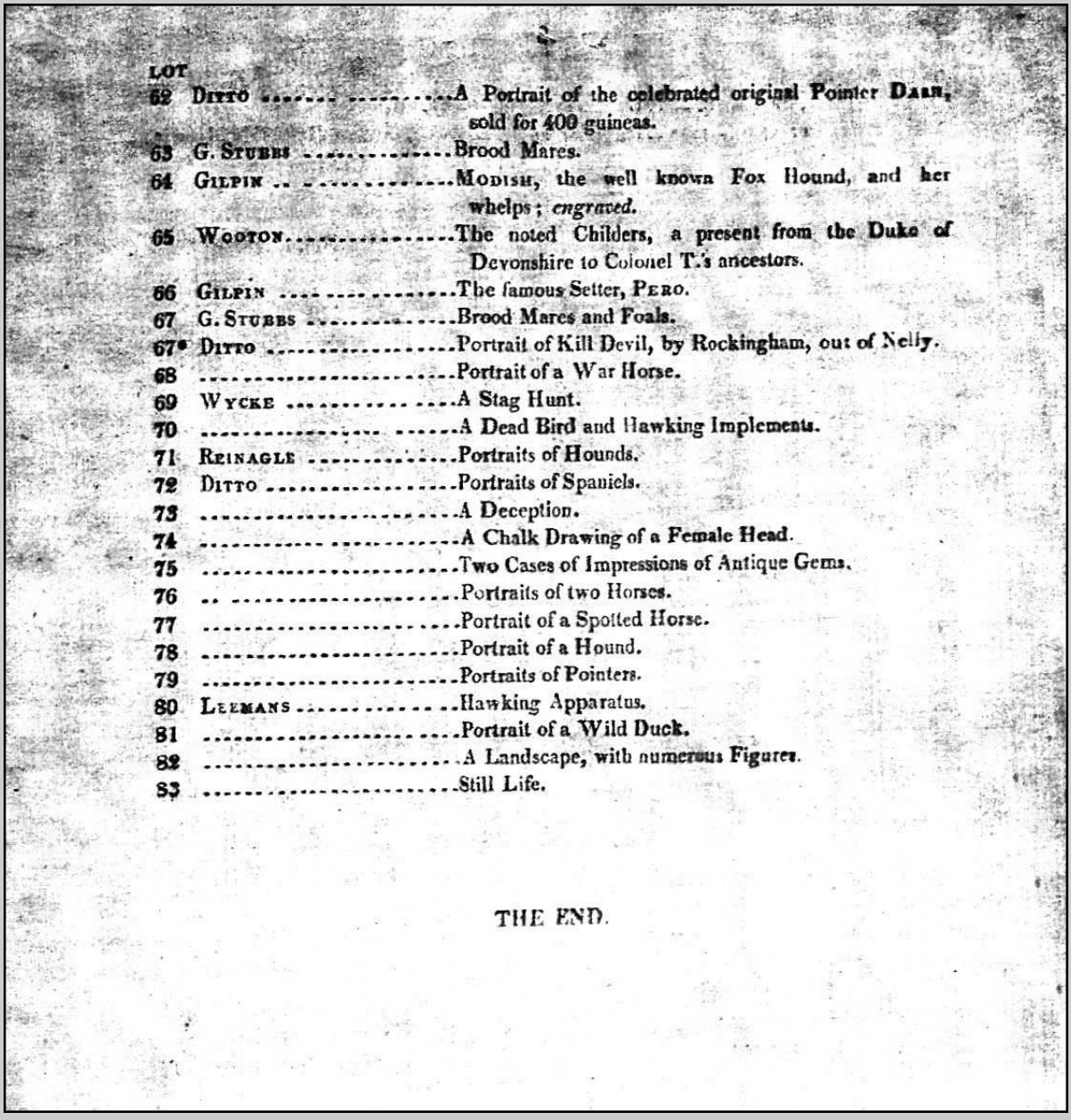
58 P. REINAGLE .....Portraits of his Children.

59 SNYDERS .....A Boar Hunt.

60 S. GILPIN .....A Portrait of the celebrated Horse JUPITER, by Eclipse, out of the Tartar Mare, the property of Colonel Thornton.

61 S. GILPIN .....The death of the Fox, by which Colonel Thornton won a table-piece of plate, and various large bets.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale



LOT

62 DITTO ..... A Portrait of the celebrated original Pointer DASH, sold for 400 guineas.

63 G. STUBBS ..... Brood Mares.

64 GILPIN ..... MODISH, the well known Fox Hound, and her whelps; *engraved.*

65 WOOTON..... The noted Childers, a present from the Duke of Devonshire to Colonel T.'s ancestors.

66 GILPIN ..... The famous Setter, PERO.

67 G. STUBBS ..... Brood Mares and Foals.

67* DITTO ..... Portrait of Kill Devil, by Rockingham, out of Nelly.

68 ..... Portrait of a War Horse.

69 WYCKE ..... A Stag Hunt.

70 ..... A Dead Bird and Hawking Implements.

71 REINAGLE ..... Portraits of Hounds.

72 DITTO ..... Portraits of Spaniels.

73 ..... A Deception.

74 ..... A Chalk Drawing of a Female Head.

75 ..... Two Cases of Impressions of Antique Gems.

76 ..... Portraits of two Horses.

77 ..... Portrait of a Spotted Horse.

78 ..... Portrait of a Hound.

79 ..... Portraits of Pointers.

80 LEEMANS ..... Hawking Apparatus.

81 ..... Portrait of a Wild Duck.

82 ..... A Landscape, with numerous Figures.

83 ..... Still Life.

THE END.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

S. Gilpin ***Dash*** Eng. R. Pollard and F. Jukes

This beautiful aquatint of the original is provided as the location of the original is unknown. Dash is considered the first example of the modern pointer and is reputed to have been the result of a cross between a Pointer and a Foxhound. He was an outstanding pointer with a great nose and the ability to cover large tracts of land in the pursuit of quarry. He also backed up other dogs on their points. It was unfortunate that he was unable to produce any offspring equal to his abilities. Interbreeding pointers with foxhounds continued for a short time but quickly was discontinued and Dash became the only significant example of this interbreeding. The original painting sold as Lot No. 62 at the Hickman's Sale.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

George Stubbs ***A Lion and A Lioness*** ca. 1770

This was a familiar and popular theme for George Stubbs an extremely popular artist, who is particularly noted for his drawings of the anatomy of a horse. Colonel Thornton collected several paintings by Stubbs and this one appears to have remained in the Thornton family through Diana his daughter and then Albert Thornton Wodehouse through the 1890' s. It was likely Lot No. 28 at the HIckman's sale and appears not to have sold until the 1890's at the sale of Diana's estate.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

John Wootton ***The Noted Childers***

Often referred to as Flying Childers, he is considered to be the first great English racehorse. Colonel Thornton seems to have inherited this painting through his family. He indicates in a letter to the editor of *The Sporting Magazine* that the painting was given to his Grandfather by the Duke of Devonshire, the owner of Childers. It was sold as Lot No. 65 at the Hickman's sale of 1820.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

George Morland ***Pointer and Hare***

Most of Colonel Thornton's paintings were dispersed to private collections and have not come up for sale in recent history, thus denying modern researchers the opportunity to see them in their original color. However we are fortunate that the subject matter attracted sufficient interest from the reading public to encourage the leading engravers to produce some exceptional engravings. Many of these engravings have been reproduced as large single pieces for sale, while others were reduced in size for publication in the numerous sporting books which flourished in the 19th century. This beautiful engraving is an example of those efforts.

The original painting was sold as Lot No. 33 at the Hickman's Sale, May 11th, 1820.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

Sawrey Gilpin ***Death of The Fox*** 1780

This is considered by many the finest work of art done by Sawrey Gilpin, It was done to commemorate a fox hunt that covered 28 miles. Colonel Thornton had made a bet that he could find a local fox to run more than 23 miles. The bet was accepted and upon winning, he was presented with a silver Epergne as a prize. In recent times several smaller versions by highly regarded artists have appeared for sale. Colonel Thornton states in his *A Sporting Tour of France*, Vol. 2 Appendix p. 228 that "The picture is twelve feet two inches by eight feet six inches and completely covers one angle of the billiard-room in the mansion of Thornville." It is referred to as "life size."

The painting was sold as Lot No. 61 at the Hickman's Sale, May 11th, 1820.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

Sawrey Gilpin ***Jupiter*** 1792

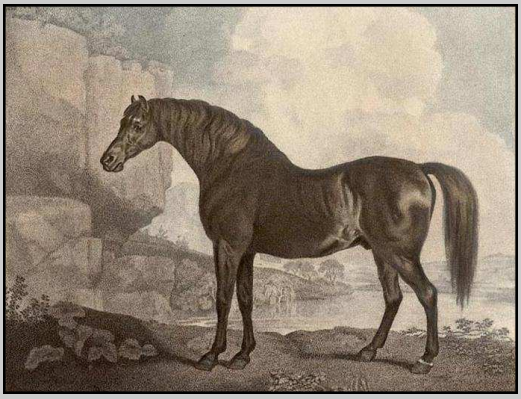
Jupiter, by the celebrated Eclipse out of a mare by Tartar, and a full brother of Volunteer, was a chestnut colt foaled in 1774. Bred by Dennis O'Kelly, Jupiter began well as a racehorse, winning two races worth 1,000 guineas each as a three-year-old, and The Fortescue Stakes at Newmarket in 1778, but broke down the following year after which he was retired to stud, advertised by O'Kelly as 15 hands and an inch high, master of 16 stone and of great length and bone in proportion'. His first winner, named Cardock, appeared as a two-year-old in 1787 and won fourteen races over seven years, while another significant offspring was Halkin, foaled in 1786, who had fifteen wins in six seasons. In 1789, the year he was bought by Colonel Thornton, Jupiter's stock won twenty-one races. Colonel Thornton used Jupiter as his primary stud horse for both race horses and hunters. In his sale of horses, the pedigrees manifest Jupiter's influence in his horse breeding program. The painting sold as Lot No. 60 at the Hickman's Sale in 1820. Christie's *Irish and British Sporting Art*, May 8th, 2009. Lot No. 101, Sold for $155,000.

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Art Sale

G. Stubbs ***Fall of Phaeton*** 1762
This was George Stubbs' first attempt at this famous Greek myth. He used the roan coach horses of Lord Grosvenor as his models. This image is supplied here to illustrate the difference in the two paintings by this respected horse painter.

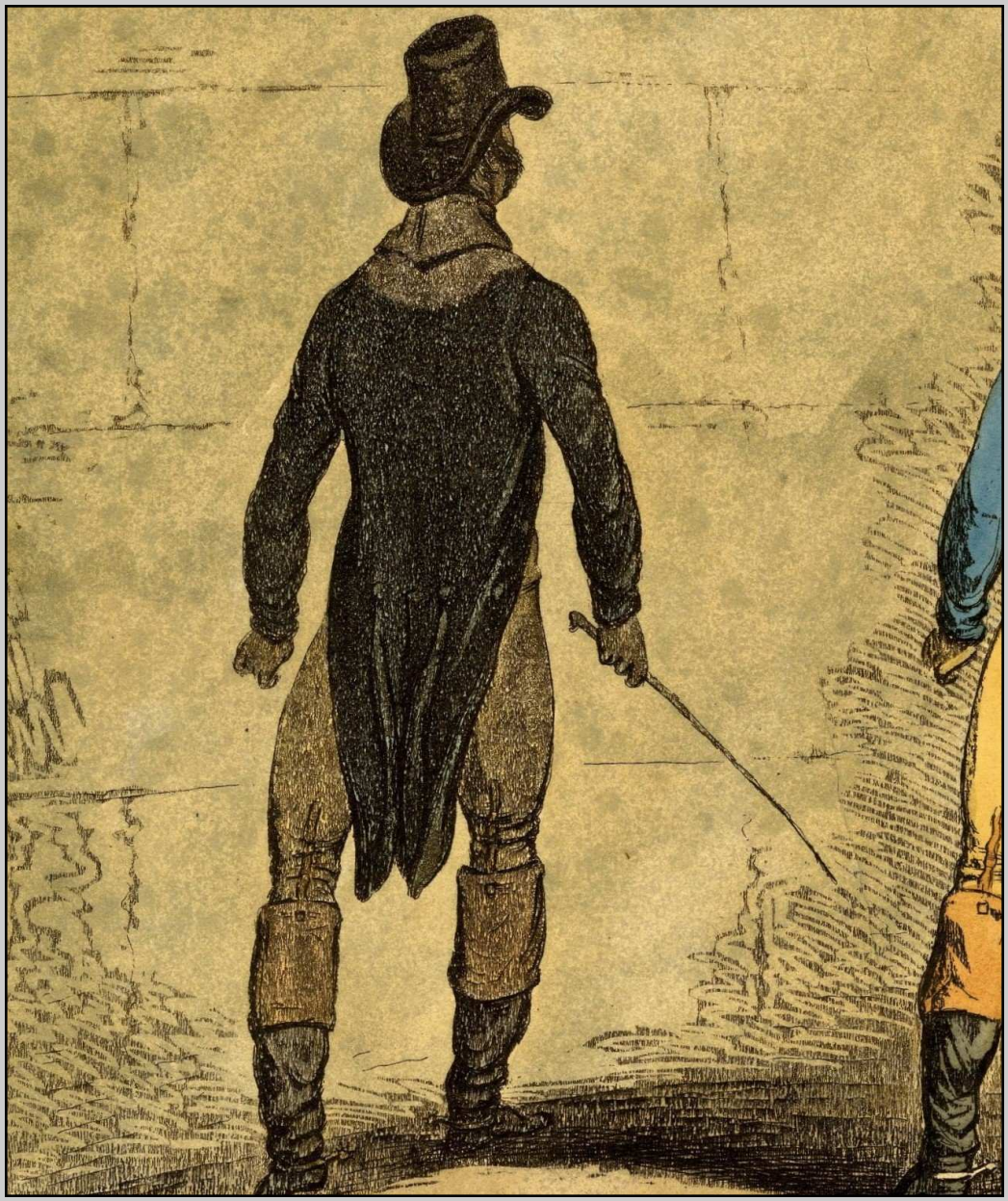
G. Stubbs ***Fall of Phaeton*** 1764
Colonel Thornton commissioned George Stubbs to create another interpretation of the myth. Many consider this version Stubbs' masterpiece at portraying horses in action. He used one of the Colonel's coach horses as the model. It was offered as Lot No. 53 at Hickman's in 1820.

G. Stubbs ***Ambrosio*** 1804
Ambrosio enjoyed a successful career winning the York for John Lowther and the St. Leger for Joseph Cookson before retiring to stud for Thomas Hayworth. This painting was sold as Lot No. 54 at Hickman's in 1820 and was sold again in December 5, 2008 at Sotheby's for $206,500.



G. Stubbs ***Old Marske*** 1804
The sire of Eclipse and a descendent of the Darley Arabian. He was champion sire in 1775 and 1776 when his value as a stallion rose with the success of Eclipse. The painting at the Hickman sale was Lot No. 52. There have been several engravings of this famous stallion.

Colonel Thornton as The Shadow of a Duke



James Gilray ***The Shadow of A Duke*** 1795

Colonel Thornton imagined that he resembled the Duke of Hamilton, whose manners and gait he imitated with the utmost care. He enjoyed being mistaken for the Duke when he walked the streets.

© Trustees of the British Museum

Colonel William Thornton and the West York Militia

Colonel William Thornton
(Thomas Thornton's Father) and
The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

Captain William Thornton and The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

England had been in religious turmoil since Henry VIII and the Protestant Reformation when they broke away from the Pope and Catholicism in the 1530's. The political and religious struggles between pro-catholic and anti-catholic forces would continue for centuries. This conflict came to a final conclusion in 1745 in Scotland between the pro-catholic armies of the Jacobites and the English forces. The name Jacobite is the Latin form of James. James II was the last Pro-Catholic ruler who had been deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. His grandson Charles Edward Stuart also known as *Bonnie Prince Charlie* as well as the *Young Pretender* would attempt to restore the pro-catholic Scottish Stuarts to the throne by promoting an insurgency. He arrived in Scotland in July of 1745 and enlisted many of the Scottish clans who enjoyed several victories even advancing as far as Derby in England. A national panic ensued in England and calls were made to enlist the local citizenry in a militia to assist the regular Army of General Hawley. Captain William Thornton recruited a company of 100 men and outfitted them at his own expense and marched to join the British Regulars in Scotland. His courage in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 earned him great accolades and the support of his fellow Yorkshire countrymen. His heroic leadership with the West York Militia set the stage for his son Thomas to serve as an officer in the same militia years later. Colonel Thomas Thornton's court-martial in 1795 and subsequent departure from the West York Militia was the defining moment of his life and began his decline in wealth and stature. He died ignominiously in Paris in 1823 with the loss of both fame and fortune. The story of the Thorntons and the West York Militia is worth retelling but little information remains as most was destroyed during the German bombing of York in WWII. Fortunately, a copy of the trial transcript has been located in the Sheffield Library in South Yorkshire, which was historically part of the West Riding of Yorkshire. This transcript had been preserved as part of a private collection given recently to the library in lieu of taxes. This transcript provides actual details on the charges against Colonel Thornton along with providing the testimony of Colonel Thornton and his accusers.

Captain William Thornton and the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

The story of Colonel William Thornton and the West York Militia is best told as an account in *The Life of Blind Jack* by John Metcalf (1795). John Metcalf was blinded by smallpox at age 6 but became an accomplished musician and the first professional road builder in England to emerge during the Industrial Revolution. He was enlisted by then Captain William Thornton to help recruit a company of men, which he accomplished in just two days. This story is taken directly from Blind Jack's personal accounts and is presented in italics while any additional commentary provided by this author is supplied in regular text. The complete text had been abridged to just those facts relevant to Captain William Thornton.

"Blind Jack" John Metcalf

A general meeting in the county of York concluded that ninety thousand pounds needed to be raised to recruit 4000 additional men in support of the King's Army in the defence of England. The method of proceeding did not reach a conclusion so Captain Thornton called upon his old friend John Metcalf also known as *Blind Jack* to help in recruiting a company of 100 men to be paid for out of his own pockets. They met at the inn where the Captain *treated him liberally with punch, and, informing him "that the French were coming to join the Scotch rebels, the consequence of which would be, that if not vigorously opposed, they would violate all our wives, daughters, and sisters."* Jack replied yes and over the next two days recruited 140 men out of which the Captain drafted sixty-four. He sent immediately to Leeds for uniforms. *The coats were blue, trimmed and faced with buff; and buff waistcoats…Arms being procured from the Tower, the men were constantly and regularly drilled. Such of them as had relations in the public line, would frequently bring their companions to drink, for the benefit of the respective houses; and Metcalf never failed to attend one or other of those parties, his fiddle and hautboy [oboe]contributing to make the time pass agreeably: and the worthy Captain was liberal in his allowance of money for such festive purposes, insomuch that had he wanted five hundred men, he could easily have obtained them. Soon after he brought them to Thornville, where he ordered every other day a fat ox to be killed for their entertainment, and gave them beer seven years old, expressing a great pleasure at its being reserved for so good a purpose. He now began to found the company as to their attachment to the cause and to himself. "My lads," said he,"you are going to form a part of a ring-fence to the finest estate in the world! The King's army is on its march to the Northward; and I have the pleasing confidence that all of you are willing to join them." —They replied, as if one soul had animated them, "We will follow you to the world's end!"*

Captain William Thornton and The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

Arriving at Newcastle, they joined the army under the command of General Wade… The tents were instantly struck; but the Swiss troops having the van, and not being willing to move at so early an hour, it was half past ten before they left the ground, and the snow by that time was become extremely deep in several places: it also proved a very severe day for hail and frost. They were often three or four hours in marching a mile… About ten at night they arrived at Ovington… but the ground was frozen so hard, that but few of the tent-pins would enter it…the men lay one upon another, greatly fatigued with their march, it having been fifteen hours from the time of their striking the tents, till their arrival at this place although the distance is only seven miles.

General George Wade

The Highland army being at Torwood, about mid-way between Falkirk and Stirling, distant from the English camp only about three miles…The English army lay all night on their arms, in expectation of being attacked… Soon after, the enemy were observed to move some of their colours from Torwood, towards Stirling, which made the English suppose that they were retreating; but this motion was a feint to deceive them. However, upon this appearance, the soldiers were ordered to pile their arms, and take some refreshment…. General Hawley went to breakfast with Lady Kilmarnock, at Calendar-House....the Highlanders, after firing their pieces, threw them down, and discharged their pistols in the horses' faces…the enemy pursued with their broad swords, cutting down the men as they fled…the men crying out at the same time, "Dear brethren, we shall all be massacred this day!"

General Henry Hawley

Captain William Thornton and The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

The rebels, as was their custom, after the discharge of their pieces, flung them away, and advanced with their broad swords close up to the first line; when the front instantly fired, and being so near, did more than double execution; which caused them to retreat, leaving a great number dead upon the spot.

The General…. drew up his men nearer Falkirk, and gave orders to keep the town until morning:… and the village being open on all sides, was a circumstance so favourable to the enemy, as induced that General to form the resolution of quitting the town with all expedition, and march to Linlithgow, where there was more shelter under the walls, in case of an attack. —This measure was fully justified by the event; for the enemy pursued so closely, that many were taken by surprise, as, in consequence of the order to keep the town all night, several had gone into the houses to put off their wet cloathes; and those who were apprised of the retreat had no sooner left the place, than the rebels took possession, and made a great many prisoners, amongst whom were twenty of Captain Thornton's men, with the Lieutenant and Ensign.

Captain Thornton, also, was in one of the houses, for the purpose before-mentioned, but had not time sufficient to effect his escape; and being alarmed by the bagpipes at the door, he retreated up stairs: in a few minutes several of the rebels rushed up, in search of the fugitives; when one of them came to the very room door behind which he had taken refuge, and overlooking him, said, "Here are none of the rascals here." The woman of the house having seen the Captain go up stairs, went to him soon after, and opening a closet door, entreated him to enter, which he did. —She then brought a dresser, and placed dishes, &c. upon it, which prevented all appearance of a door in that place; and fortunately there was no bed in the room. About ten minutes after he had been fixed in his new quarters, a great number of people, consisting chiefly of Highland officers, amongst whom was Secretary Murray, took possession of the apartment, which being large, they proposed making use of for business during their stay.

The next morning as many of Captain Thornton's men as had escaped being taken prisoners, (about forty-eight in number)… they supposed him to have shared the fate of many other brave men who had fallen in the action of that day, and which they all sincerely lamented…. The disappearance, also, of the two other officers, and twenty of their men, greatly dispirited them; and, together with the suspension from their regular pay, induced some of them to apply to Metcalf for a supply, in order to carry them home.

We will now return to Captain Thornton, whom we left on Friday in the closet, in close neighbourhood with the Highland Chiefs, who every day transacted business in the room. The Quarter-Masters of the rebel army having taken the house, had given the woman to whom it belonged a small apartment backward; but every night she took care to carry him such provisions as she could convey through a crevice at the bottom of the door; and this mode she used for fear of alarming those who slept in the adjoining rooms.

Captain William Thornton and The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

The closet was only a yard and a half square; and the Captain's [Thornton] cloathes being wet when he entered, made his situation the more uncomfortable, as he had got a severe cold, and sometimes could not forbear coughing, even when the rebels were in their room. Once in particular, hearing a cough, they said one to another "what is that?" but one of them answered, that it was somebody in another room; —not in the least suspecting a door in the place where the closet was.

On Monday night the woman of the house went to the door to carry provisions as usual, when the Captain [Thornton] said to her, "I am determined to come out, let the consequence be what it may; for I will not die like a dog in this hole;" but she begged that he would bear his confinement till the next night, and she would adopt some plan to effect his escape. She accordingly consulted an old carpenter, who was true to the Royal cause, and he came the next night, removed the dresser, and liberated the Captain. They proceeded down stairs in the dark, to the woman's apartment, where she made tea, whilst the carpenter concerted their plan of operation. They dressed him in a pladdie and brogues, with a black wig, and the carpenter packed him up a bag of tools, as if he was going with his master to work as soon as it was light. The Captain had only ten guineas about him, (having lost his cash with his Lieutenant, Mr. Crofts) eight of which he gave to the woman who had so faithfully preserved him, and two to the carpenter, who, to secrete them, put them into his mouth along with his tobacco, fearful of a search by the Highlanders, who would have suspected him had they found more than a shilling. Everything being ready, they set out, the Captain with his bag of tools following his supposed master. On coming into the croud, he looked about, and was rather behind; and although in disguise, did not look like a common workman; —which making the old man dread a discovery, he called out to him, "Come alang, ye filthy loon: ye have had half a bannock and a mutchkin of drink in your wame—we shall be too late for our day's wark".... The old man at the same time looking the other way, saw two or three hundred Highlanders, who had been on plunder, coming down a lane which led from Callendar-House (Lord Kilmarnock's seat) into the main road; and being desirous of passing the end of this lane before they came up, in order to avoid them, said,

"We shall have a worse piece of work of it than we had on Friday, if you do not hasten your pace;" and begged the Captain to come forward, which he did; but walking briskly up a hill, he suddenly stopped, and said,"I am sick:" however they gained their point, and passed the Highlanders; for had they come up with them, the least injury would have been a march back to Falkirk, as prisoners. On going two miles farther, they arrived at a house belonging to a friend of the carpenter's, and which had been plundered: there the old man got an egg, but not being able to find a pan to boil it, he roasted it in peat ashes, and gave it to the Captain, to put in his wame, for so he called his stomach. Proceeding a few miles farther, they arrived at another house, where they procured a horse for the Captain. —He arrived at the English out-posts, and making himself known was permitted to pass, and reached Edinburgh in safety.

Captain William Thornton and The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745

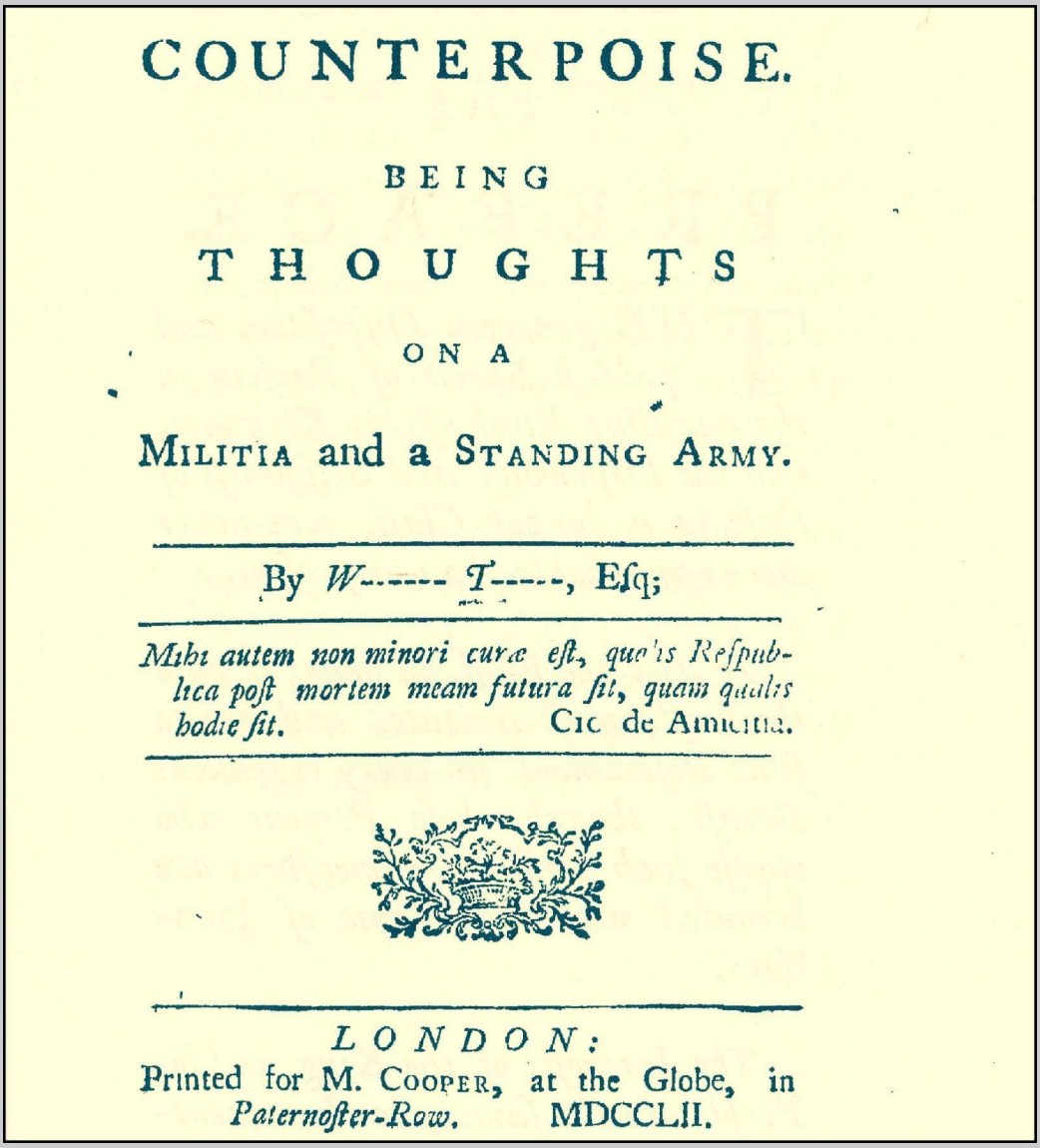
At Aberdeen the Duke gave a ball to the ladies, and personally solicited Captain Thornton for his fidler, there being at that time no music in the army except Colonel Howard's, (The Old Buffs) and which being wind music were unaccustomed to country dances. As the rebel army was only twenty miles distant, no invitations were sent till five o'clock, tho' the ball was to begin at six. Twenty-five couple danced for eight hours, and his Royal Highness made one of the set, and several times, as he passed Metcalf, who stood on a chair to play, shouted "Thornton, play up:" but Jack needed no exhortation, for he was very well practised.

In a little time they proceeded on their march, and engaged the rebels on Culloden moor, giving them a total defeat [April 16, 1746], although they had targets to ward off the bayonet, whilst they cut away with their broad swords, yet the Duke found a method of frustrating their plan, by pushing the bayonet over the right arm, which rendered their targets of no use. Kingston's Light Horse pursued them in their disorder and flight, and made a great slaughter amongst them. The English prisoners were now all liberated.—Two or three of Captain Thornton's men had died in prison; and the rest returned home.

The rebellion being completely suppressed, Captain Thornton returned home also, accompanied by Metcalf, of whose family it is full time to take some notice.—He had the happiness to find his faithful partner and children in good health;... This declaration, following a most cordial reception, gave full confirmation to an opinion which Metcalf had ever held, viz. that the caresses and approbation of the softer sex, are the highest reward a soldier can deserve or obtain.

About a year after their return, a vacancy happening in the representation for the city of York, the citizens sent for Mr. Thornton, and unanimously elected him, free of all expence. A short time after this, the militia was raised, and he was, as his merit well entitled him to be, appointed Colonel of the West-York battalion; which situation he held, with advantage to the service, and honour to himself, for the remainder of his life.

Captain William Thornton Makes his Case for a Militia in 1752



COUNTERPOISE.

BEING

THOUGHTS

ON A

MILITIA and a STANDING ARMY.

By *W------ T-----*, Esq;

Mihi autem non minori curæ est, qualis Respublica post mortem meam futura sit, quam qualis hodie sit. Cic de Amicitia.

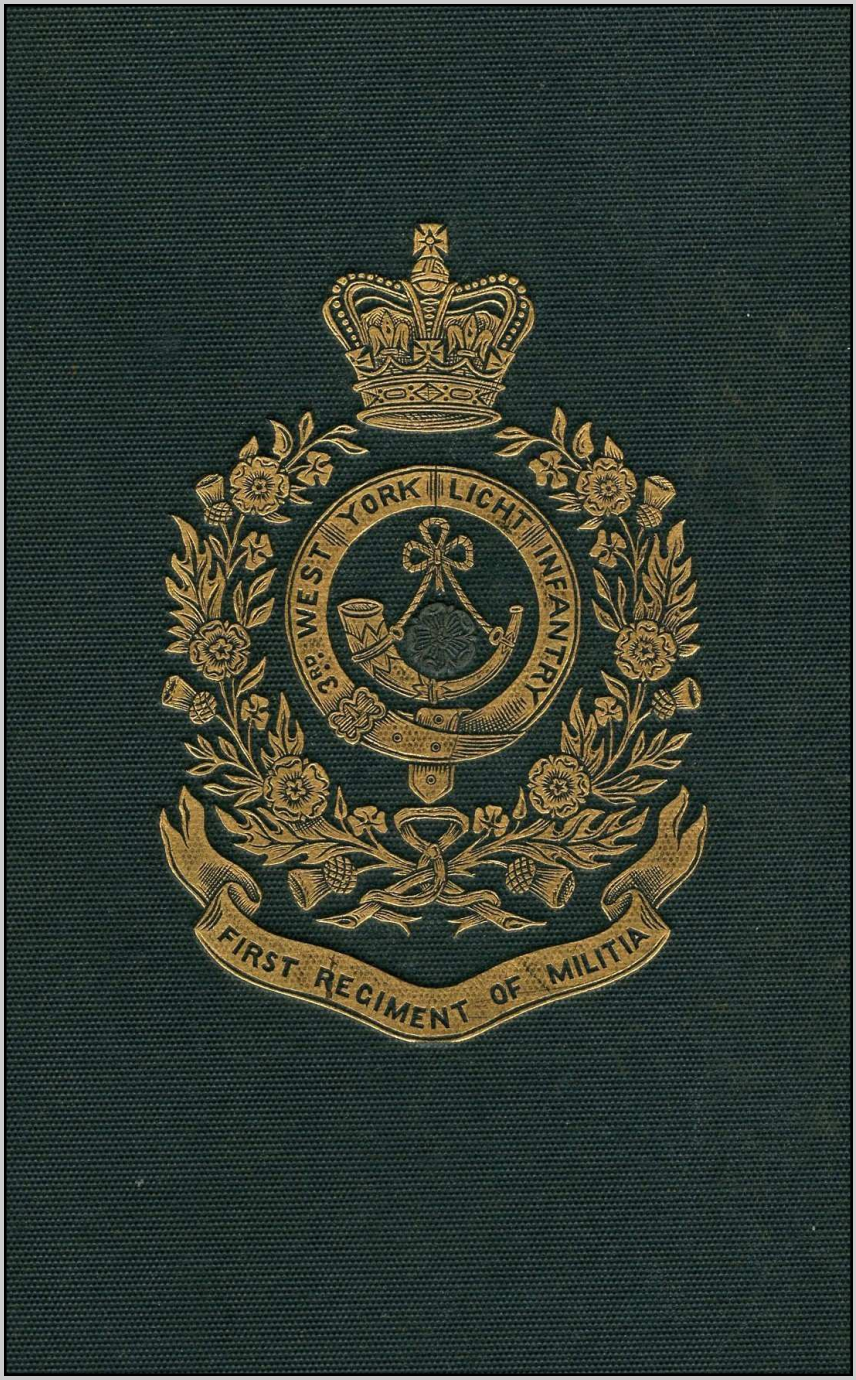
LONDON:
Printed for M. COOPER, at the Globe, in *Paternoster-Row.* MDCCLII.

The Militia Act of 1757
Enacted just 5 years after Thornton's Counterpoise

Colonel William Thornton proposed that a standing militia be used to augment the regular army which in many cases were drawn from other countries and not British citizens. Prime Minister William Pitt helped get the law enacted in light of the numerous conflicts with the French and the American Colonies. Each county was required to furnish a quota of men apportioned among the various parishes; men were to be chosen by lot to serve for three years (this being the first provision of a fixed term of service) or to provide a substitute, and vacancies were to be filled from time to time by a like process of ballot. The force was to be annually trained and exercised for a limited period, and in case of invasion or danger thereof, or in case of rebellion, the Crown could order it or any portion of it to be embodied. Under this Act 30,000 militiamen were raised by ballot and embodied from 1759 to 1763.

Uniform of A Private in the West York Militia

The Coat of Arms of the West York Militia



Historical Records of the West York Militia

HISTORICAL RECORDS

OF THE

FIRST REGIMENT OF MILITIA;

OR,

Third West York Light Infantry.

BY

CAPTAIN G. A. RAIKES,

3rd West York Light Infantry Militia;
Lieutenant-Instructor of Musketry Hon. Artillery Company;
Author of "Militia Reform," &c.

With Illustrations.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1876.

The Colors of the West York Militia

The Officers of the West York Militia in 1763

On the 22nd of October, 1763, the Earl of Huntingdon, then Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding, submitted the names of the gentlemen willing to serve in the "Northern Regiment of the West Riding," most of whom it will be observed had held Commissions in the Third Regiment, under Colonel Thornton, who was appointed to the command of the new Regiment.

The names were submitted of the gentlemen willing to accept Commissions in the "Southern Regiment of the West Riding," on the 4th of November.* The two Regiments thus formed were Officered as follows:—

First, or Southern Regiment of the West Riding.	Second, or Northern Regiment of the West Riding.
COLONEL.	COLONEL.
Sir George Savile, Bart.	Wm. Thornton †
LIEUT.-COLONEL.	LIEUT.-COLONEL.
Sir Geo. Dalston	John Lister
MAJOR.	MAJOR.
Richard Burton	Wm. Weddal †
CAPTAINS.	CAPTAINS.
Sir George Savile, Bart.	Wm. Thornton †
Sir Geo. Dalston	John Lister
Richard Burton	Wm. Weddal †
Wm. Radcliffe	Wm. Jackson
John Roebuck	Henry Stapleton
William Gream	Geo. Thompson †
Benjamin Farrand	Geo. Iveson †
George Cook	Geo. Hassel †
William Denton	John Wilks
Peter Willson Overend	Geo. Cooke
CAPT.-LIEUTENANT(QUARTERMASTER)	
Luck Annington	
LIEUTENANTS.	LIEUTENANTS.
Richard Zouch	Philip Stapleton
Abraham Woodhead	John Middleton

* War Office Militia Letter Books, Vol. III., pp. 154-5, 157-9.

† Late of Colonel Thornton's (3rd) Regiment. It will be observed that although the Northern, or Col. Thornton's Regiment, was first completed, the Southern, or Sir George Savile's Regiment, took rank as the First Regiment.

Ensign Thomas Thornton in 1763

LIEUTENANTS.

John Deykin
Edward Harrison
William Wilks
John Hawley
Ibbitson Stamer
Thomas Stevenson
George Swiney
John Burton

LIEUTENANTS.

Richard Kent
Samuel Storr
Francis Maud
Christopher Wharton *
Philip Sands *
Wm. Simpson
Charles Oates
Samuel Wand * } Lieuts. of
James Wiggins } Grenadiers
Isaac Toll
Charles Oates

ENSIGNS.

William Dawson
William Overend

ENSIGNS.

Richard Burton *
Edward Barker
William Dawson
James Wiggins
John Riston
William Robinson
Christopher Croft
Thomas Thornton
John Hutchinson
John Dupont
William Baynes
William Preston

SURGEON.

William Walker

1765–1777.—After being disembodied at the end of December, 1762, the Militia was only assembled annually for twenty-eight days' Training and Exercise, during the succeeding fifteen years, and nothing of interest occurred.

On the 3rd of March, 1778, the Militia was ordered to be embodied, in consequence of the American War, and served for exactly five years, being disembodied in March, 1783.

In the year 1786, an Act † was passed to amend and reduce into one Act the Laws relating to the Militia, which considerably increased the qualification of officers, but the quota of privates

* Late of Colonel Thornton's (or 3rd) Regiment.
† 26 Geo. III., c. 107.

Colonel Thomas Thornton and the West York Militia

His Decline and Court-Martial

Colonel Thomas Thornton of the West York Militia

John Russell ***Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Thornton*** ca. 1772
Courtesy Tony Roberts @ Cider House Galleries

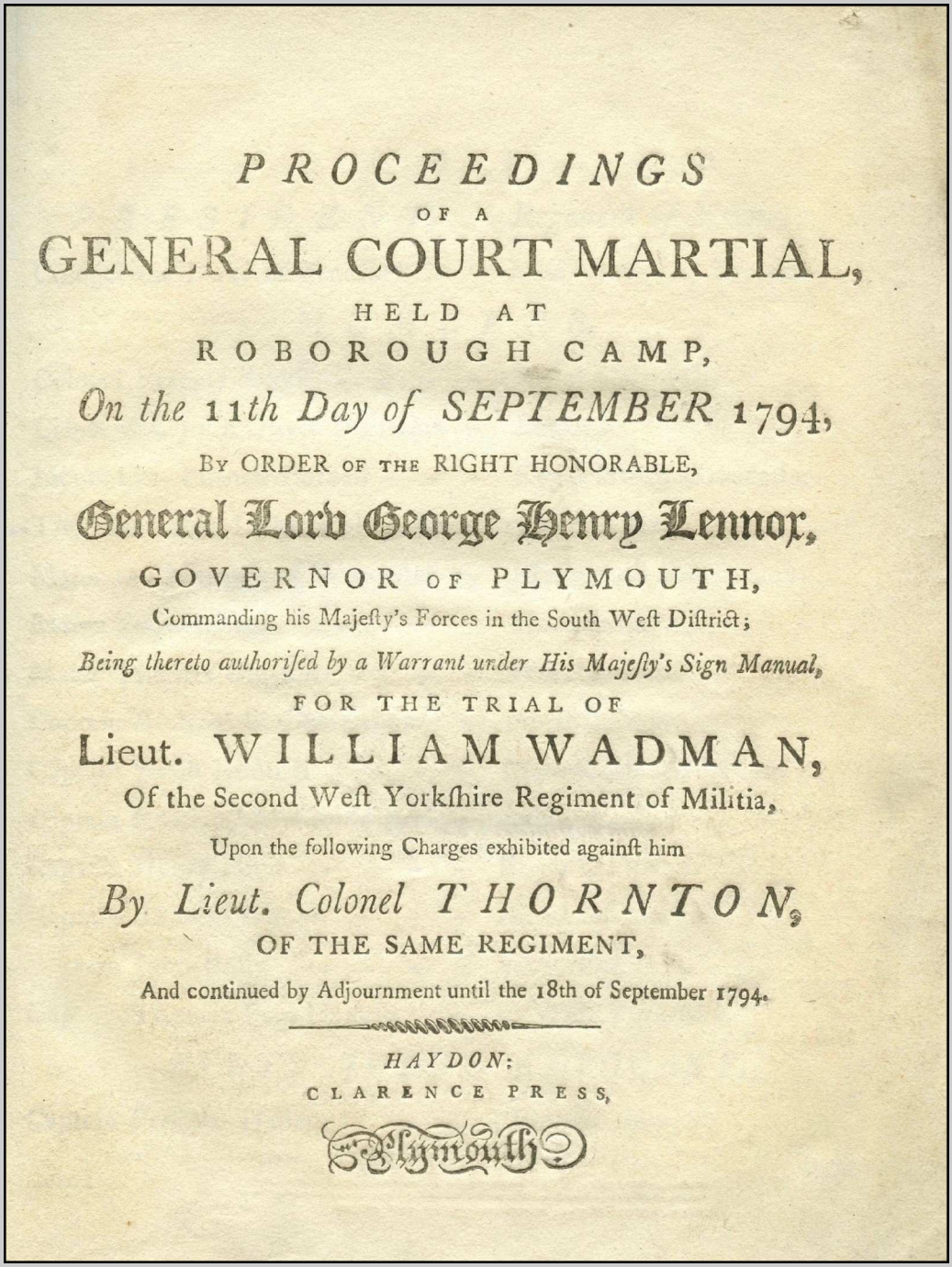
This chapter on Colonel Thornton provides an expanded look at Colonel Thomas Thornton's court-martial and subsequent attempts to clear his own name through several publications detailing the actual testimony from him and others.

Colonel Thomas Thornton's Decline in the West York Militia

Colonel Thomas Thornton had been a member in the 3rd West York Militia since 1763 when he became an Ensign. His father Colonel William Thornton helped form the original Militia during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. He also became a staunch advocate of the Militia as a way to help defend England while regular troops were engaged elsewhere. Three major conflicts such as The Seven Years War (1754-1763), The American Revolution 1775-1783, and The War of the French Revolution 1793-1802 kept the regular army engaged around the world. England's Militia was "embodied" or called to duty for much of these periods of conflicts. This required local militias to report for annual "musters" in different regions of England, which were often hundreds of miles from home. These musters required a 30-day period of training for officers and men often at great inconvenience to all. The men would be quartered on the "encampment" areas while officers would be billeted in local accommodations. Colonel Thornton fulfilled his militia responsibilities for over 30 years seemingly without conflict until an incident on July 22, 1794 with a Lieutenant William Wadman. This court-martial in September 1794 seemed to lay the foundation for Colonel Thornton's own subsequent court-martial the following year on the 17th of August 1795. The copies of these various proceedings as well as Thornton's own writings on the matters appeared to have been destroyed during the bombing of York in WWII. Recently these documents have once again come to light and are included in this important military section on his life. They have been reproduced in facsimile when possible in order to provide Thornton researchers with an accurate information and depiction of the events of that period. Thornton's personal decline seems to have originated from these events. Was it a conspiracy originating from the Duke of York over Thornton's purchase of Thornville Royal four years earlier? Hopefully this information will help the readers to their own conclusion.

Colonel Thornton In Militia Uniform
This full length portrait was presented for sale in 1924 and was illustrated in an auction catalogue in black and white. The portrait appears to have been reduced to just the upper half of his body which is depicted on the adjacent page.

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton



PROCEEDINGS
OF A
GENERAL COURT MARTIAL,
HELD AT
ROBOROUGH CAMP,
On the 11th Day of SEPTEMBER 1794,
BY ORDER OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE,
General Lord George Henry Lennox,
GOVERNOR OF PLYMOUTH,
Commanding his Majesty's Forces in the South West District;
Being thereto authorised by a Warrant under His Majesty's Sign Manual,
FOR THE TRIAL OF
Lieut. WILLIAM WADMAN,
Of the Second West Yorkshire Regiment of Militia,
Upon the following Charges exhibited against him
By Lieut. Colonel THORNTON,
OF THE SAME REGIMENT,
And continued by Adjournment until the 18th of September 1794.

HAYDON:
CLARENCE PRESS,
Plymouth

The Court-Martial of Lt. Wadman began the decline of Colonel Thornton

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

PRESIDENT, Regiment of Militia.

Colonel the Duke of Beaufort - - Monmouth and Brecon.

MEMBERS.

Colonel Francis Rodd - - - - Royal Cornwall.
Lieut. Col. John Oliver Williams - Ditto.
Lieut. Col. Purnell Purnell - - - Royal North Glouceſter.
The Honorable Lieut. Col. J. Coventry Worceſter.
Major the Marquis of Worceſter - Monmouth and Brecon.
Major Samuel Iſted - - - - Northampton.
Major Thomas Clutton - - - Worceſter.
Captain Richard Brooke Supple - Northampton.
Captain Jacob Rudhall - - - Monmouth and Brecon.
Captain Rowland Mainwaring - Stafford.
Captain Henry Peter - - - - Royal Cornwall.
Captain Richard Gough - - - Royal Glamorgan
Captain John Kelly - - - - Worceſter.
Captain Thomas Pate Hankin - 2d Weſt Yorkſhire.

DEPUTY JUDGE ADVOCATE.

Captain Percival Haſlam - - Worceſterſhire.

Charges

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

(6)

Charges exhibited againſt Lieut. Wadman, of the Second Weſt Yorkſhire Regiment of Militia, by Lieut. Col. Thornton of the ſame Regiment.

1ſt.— For having been guilty of conduct unbecoming the Character of an Officer, and a Gentleman, by ſeducing ſome of the Officers of the Regiment, and by attempting to ſeduce others, by wilful miſrepreſentations, to ſend Lieut. Colonel Thornton to Coventry, on the 22d of July laſt; and alſo for diſputing Lieut. Col. Thornton's authority on the ſame day.

2d.— For mutinous conduct on the 2d of Auguſt laſt, by repeatedly attempting to inſtigate the Soldiers under his command, to depart from their duty, due to Lieut. Col. Thornton; and upon their refuſing ſo to do, he confined ſome, and attempted to confine his whole Guard; and alſo for confining Soldiers whilſt on Guard, on the 2d of Auguſt, and not reporting them.

3d.— For diſobedience of orders on the third of Auguſt, in not going to his Tent when ordered ſo to do by Lieut Col. Thornton, and alſo repeating the ſame conduct, on the ſame day, to Lieut. Colonel Thornton, when Field Officer of the Picquet, and for abuſing him in front of the Parade, and the Streets of the encampment.

Roborough Camp, 9th Sept. 1794.

(Signed)

THOMAS THORNTON, Lieut. Colonel,

Weſt Yorkſhire Regiment of Militia.

Lieut.

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

Lieut. Thomas Bracken, of the Weſt Yorkſhire Regiment of Militia, ſworn, and examined by Lieut. Colonel Thornton.

Q. Was you the laſt Officer of the Regiment who joined the Corps with a detachment from Cornwall?

A. I was.

Q. Did not Lieut. Wadman, on the 22d of July laſt, in the Meſs Room, attempt to ſeduce you to ſend me to Coventry?

A. When I refuſed to ſhew Lieut. Colonel Thornton marks of diſapprobation, at the inſtigation of other Officers, Lieut. Wadman then ſaid, "we muſt ſend you to Coventry."

Q. What were the modes uſed at that meeting, by Lieut. Wadman, to ſeduce the Officers to ſend me to Coventry?

A. I do not recollect that Lieut. Wadman ſaid any thing more than the words already ſtated.

Q. Was not Lieut. Wadman one of thoſe Officers, who propoſed, that a ſhew of hands ſhould conſtitute the opinion of thoſe who wiſhed to ſhew me marks of diſapprobation; and that thoſe who did not hold up their hands, ſhould be ſent to Coventry?

A. Yes.

Q. Was

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

September 13th, 1794, the Court met agreeably to the order of adjournment.

Samuel Wheatley, Serjeant in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, ſworn and examined by Lieutenant Colonel Thornton.

Q. Was you ſtanding at the Evening Gun, in front of the line, on Sunday evening, the third of Auguſt?

A. Yes.

Queſtion by the Court.

Q. Where was that Gun placed?

A. On the right of the Weſt York, and in the front of the anterior Camp Colour.

Queſtion by Lieutenant Colonel Thornton.

Q. Did you obſerve any thing particular in the front of the Weſt York, and what was it?

A. I ſaw Lieutenant Wadman in front of the Regiment, between Lieut. Colonel Thornton and the Adjutant; Lieutenant Wadman had then his Sword drawn, and ſtanding in a threatening poſition; I then ſaw the Adjutant go away from Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, and ordered the Picquet to advance; a little after that, Lieutenant Wadman put up his Sword, and went up to Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, who was on horſeback,

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

horſeback, and doubled his fiſt at him, and called him a ſcoundrel, and a rogue, and that he would prove him one; during this time, ſeveral of the men of the Weſt York came and ſurrounded Lieutenant Wadman; a ſcuffle enſued between Lieutenant Wadman and the men with arms, and I ſaw Lieutenant Wadman fall. I believe he was knocked down; then ſome men took him up, and carried him away.

Queſtions by the Court.

Q. Did the ſcuffle enſue on the Parade, in front of the Regiment?

A. Yes.

Q. When Lieutenant Wadman ſtood with his Sword drawn, in a threatening poſition, who did it appear that he meant to threaten?

A. Either Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, the Adjutant, or the Men with arms.

Q. What do you mean by the threatning poſition?

A. I thought that if any perſon had then approached Lieutenant Wadman, he would have ſtruck him with his Sword.

Thomas Dugdale, Corporal, in Captain Harvey's Grenadier Company, in the Second Weſt Yorkſhire Regiment of Militia, ſworn and examined by Lieutenant Colonel Thornton.

Q. Was

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

That on Sunday evening, a little before Gun-firing, Lieutenant Colonel Thornton rode up to Lieutenant Wadman, who was then ſtanding in the front of the Grenadiers, and ordered him, in the moſt civil manner, to his Tent. Lieutenant Wadman refuſed, and ſaid he would not go to his Tent, but upon Lieutenant Wadman refuſing repeatedly to obey his orders, Lieutenant Colonel Thornton called for the Adjutant, and deſired that he would take him to his Tent; Lieutenant Wadman ſaid, he would be damned if either the Adjutant, or any one elſe, ſhould take him to his Tent. The Adjutant uſed every means poſſible to induce Lieutenant Wadman to go to his Tent, but without any effect. Lieut. Colonel Thornton then ordered a File of Men; Lieutenant Wadman then looked earneſtly upon Lieutenant Colonel Thornton at that word, and ſaid a File of Men, A File of Men; and as he ſpoke theſe words he drew his Sword, and ſwore he would run the firſt man through the body, that dared to lay hands upon him; he called the Lieutenant Col. a Scoundrel, and a Rogue, and ſaid if he would come from his horſe, he would fight him, and damned his body, he would ſee him out the next morning. The Corporal who commanded the File of Men, had formed a circle round Lieutenant Wadman, ſoon after the circle was formed, I ſaw Lieutenant Wadman fall.

Queſtions

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

Q. In what condition did you find me?

A. I found a wound given with a Bayonet, (as I ſuppoſed)which had pierced about three quarters of an inch into the Windpipe, and your Face much ſwelled with wind, in conſequence of that wound, and likewiſe a wound in your Thigh, and a very ſmall one near your Hip, given to appearance, with the ſame ſort of Inſtrument; likewiſe a Bruiſe upon your Breſt, ſuppoſed to be given with the but end of a Firelock; likewiſe a blow upon your head.

Q. Did you think my Life endangered in conſequence of the bruiſes and wounds I received?

A. Certainly.

Q. Did you not report my Situation to Lieutenant General Morris, as dangerous, many days after I received the ill treatment abovementioned.

A. I did, in conſequence of Lieut. General Morris's application to me.

Queſtion by Lieut. Colonel Thornton.

Q. Do you not believe, that the ſtate of intoxication, in which the Priſoner had been, might have cauſed a greater degree of inflammation than would have otherwiſe been produced? A. It

Court-Martial of Lieut. Wadman by Colonel Thomas Thornton

Q. Did you hear the Adjutant order them to "charge their Bayonets" upon the Priſoner?

A. I do not recollect that I did.

Edmund Mark Winn, Captain, in the Second Weſt Yorkſhire Regiment of Militia, ſworn, and examined by the Priſoner.

Q. Did you ſee a party of Soldiers, of the Second Weſt York, attack me on the Parade, on Sunday evening, the third of Auguſt laſt, with their Firelocks?

A. I did.

Q. By whoſe orders?

A. By Lieutenant Colonel Thornton's.

Q. What enſued?

A. The Soldiers attacked the Priſoner with their Firelocks, and he received a blow, which brought him to the ground.

Q. Did I appear to you to be much intoxicated at the time?

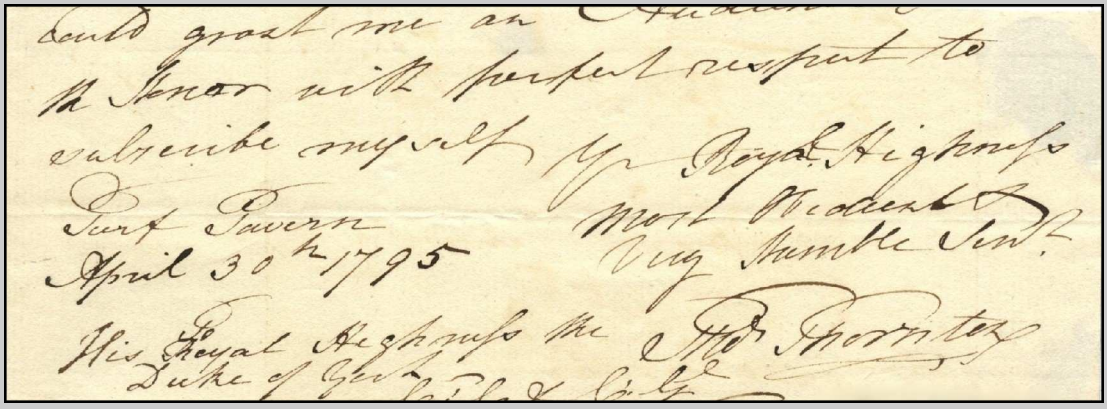
A. Extremely ſo.

Q. Did I attempt to offer any violence to Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, or to the Soldiers?

A. You did not.

Q. Did

Request for an Audience with the Duke of York on April 30th, 1795



Thormanby-*Kings of the Rod, Rifle and Gun, 1908*

"Soon after his return from his famous sporting tour in the north, which, however, was only one of many, Colonel Thornton sold his paternal estate of Old Thornville, and purchased from H.R.H. the Duke of York, Allerton Mauleverer, which he rechristened Thornville Royal. There was a tradition that the Colonel won this estate from the Duke at cards, but that was not the case, The covenant of purchase is extant [still exists] by which Colonel Thornton agrees to pay H.R.H. the Duke of York; £110,000 for Allerton Mauleverer —; £10,000 down on signing the covenant; £20,000 ten days later on entering into possession; £30,000 on New Michaelmas Day and; £50,000 any time within the year. The Duke behaved very shabbily, and tried to trick the vendee out of £5,000; but the spirited Yorkshire sportsman would not submit to be swindled even by a Prince of the Blood. H.R.H. was ignominiously worsted, and never again did he enjoy the hospitality of the master of Thornville Royal."

"But the Duke [of York] had his revenge some three years later, when Colonel Thornton was court-martialed for allowing himself to be drawn in his carriage into camp by the soldiers of his regiment, with whom he was immensely popular. Colonel Thornton was convinced that the Duke, then Commander-in-Chief, instigated the court-martial out of spite, and that the officers backed him up out of toadyism. In a pamphlet entitled *An Elucidation of a Mutinous Conspiracy entered into by the Officers of the West York Regiment of Militia against their Commanding Officer in the year 1794. Dedicated (sans permission) to H.R.H. the Duke of York*, he gave a full report of the proceedings, with his own indignant defence." The final passage, descriptive of the delivery of the sentence of the court-martial, is found at the end of the court-martial documents.

The partial letter depicted above was purchased at an auction of autographs. Unfortunately only the bottom portion remains but clearly indicates the fact Colonel Thornton was requesting an audience with the Duke of York possibly to clear up their differences . The letter was written just 3 months before his court-martial on August 17th, 1795 of which some portions of those proceedings are on the following pages. Also illustrated are portions from self published *The Memorial of Colonel Thornton* 1796 which contains letters and documents which the Colonel feels should exonerate him. The dedication to the Duke of York from the *An Elucidation of a Mutinous Conspiracy* published in 1800 is also attached for illustrative purposes.

Colonel Thornton states on page 19 of the Court-Martial Proceedings that he has already been the subject of Seven Court-Martials, all of which he has been acquitted. This certainly would give credence to his belief that he was being excessively and unnecessarily prosecuted out of jealousy.

However it is clear that Colonel Thornton's decline began with his purchase of Thornville Royal. As the proprietor of Thornville Royal, he may have thought it gave him equality with titled gentlemen but he quickly learned that it did not. He spent his entire inheritance pursuing field sports and the "good life".

Court-Martial of Col. Thornton Begins on August 17th, 1795

(I)

COURT MARTIAL

Copy of the Proceedings of a General Court-Martial, held at the Rutland Mess House on Burnham Down, on the 17th of August, 1795, in pursuance of an Order for that purpose from General the Duke of RICHMOND, *Commander of the District; being their unto authorized by a Warrant under his Majesties Sign Manual, for the Trial of Lieutenant-Colonel* THOMAS THORNTON, *of the 2nd Battalion of the West York Militia, upon certain Charges exhibited against him by Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Sloper, K B. and continued by adjournments to the 14th of September.*

THE Officers who composed the Court-Martial were,

PRESIDENT.	Regiments of Militia
Colonel Sir John Woodhouse	*Earl Norfolk*
MEMBERS.	
Colonel Lord C. Spencer	*Oxford*
Colonel Bullock	*East Essex*
Colonel Earl Of Cork	*Somerset*
Lieutenant-Colonel Milford	*South Hants.*
Lieutenant Colonel Kelly	*South Devon*
Lieutenant Colonel Bradyll	*Lancaster*
Major Williams	*Shropshire*
Major Veley	*Oxford*
Major South	*South Hants.*
Major Steel	*Suffex*
Captain Toovey	*Oxford*
Captain Wise	*Warwick*
Captain Prouse	*Somerset*
Captain Woodhouse	*East Norfolk*
Captain Gouch	*Ditto*
Captain Brocas	*Berkshire*

THOMAS STOR, Judge Advocate

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton's Opening Remarks and Objections

Before the members were sworn, the President politely asked me if there were any among them to whom I should object. I observed, in reply, that no man could have a higher opinion of the integrity or honor of the Gentleman who composed the Court, both in the individual and collective capacities, than I had; and if that had been the first time of my appearing before a Court-Martial, I must have thought myself extremely fortunate in having the members of the present Court for my Judges. But having *experienced* in former trials the fatal effects of *first impressions*, and standing in front of them, as I then did, under circumstances which clearly proved me to be the object of the most powerful and determined animosity, I could not but conceive myself in a situation which precluded all compliment, and would, I hope, excuse my exercising the privilege of EXCEPTION, not withstanding the high and undissembled opinion I had expressed of the Members of that Honorable Court: for my exceptions were

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Colonel Thornton's Opening Remarks and Objections

not founded on any supposed depravity of morals or principles in the members I should name, not suggested by the apprehension of their doing me *willful injustice*; but on the natural impulse of *human affections* and the known frailty of *human nature*. Having thus premised, I objected to Colonel the Earl of CORK, and also Lieutenant Colonel BRADYLL. Though not legally required to assign my reason for doing so, I thought it proper, in point of delicacy, to make a voluntary declaration of the cause of exception; and accordingly acquainted the Court that I excepted to the Earl of CORK, because I noticed his forwardness and assiduity on the day I was drawn into camp, in aiding and counseling Lord DOWNE, whose measures on that occasion were certainly more calculated to render me obnoxious to censure, than to support military discipline, to preserve order, or to secure the tranquility of the camp: and such was my opinion of Lord DOWNE, that I should be very doubtful of obtaining justice from any man, who was so connected with him as to be accessible to his influence.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton's Opening Remarks and Objections

(4)

My objection to Lieutenant-Colonel BRADYLL being similar in nature, though not equal in degree, was suggested, I said, by his known intimacy with the Duke of NORFOLK, whom I conceived to be extremely averse to me in the military concerns of the West Riding of the County of York, and whose wishes I had great reason to believe were strongly interested against me in the preceding Trial.

After stating these grounds of exception, I solemnly disclaimed having any other objection to either of the Honorable Members, that could induce a moments hesitation in committing any question, however interesting or important to me, to their determination. The Earl of CORK, then rose, and addressing himself to the SENATORIAL *solemnity* to the Court, declared UPON HIS HONOR, that *he was not on the ground of the encampment at all on the day Colonel Thornton was drawn into camp.* I instantly replied, that, after so *positive* and *solemn an assertion*, I must necessarily conclude I was mistaken, and of course, withdraw my objections to LORD CORK; which I begged leave also with respect to MR. BRAYDALL, who was

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton's Opening Remarks and Objections

about to retire. The court assented; and after a short prologue by GENERAL SLOPER, who played the part of PROSECUTOR, a Farce, called the Mountain of LABOR, was operated by Lord DOWNE, in the character of a MILITIA COLONEL.

This piece, through the *powerful* influence of the AUTHOR, had had a run of more than three weeks without intermission; but neither the perseverance of the *Manager*, the exertion of the Performers, nor the critical display of *mummery* and *grimace*, could procure it a favorable reception. Every representation of it was received with strong marks of disapprobation and disgust by the audience, who could not be induced (*however sanctioned*) to countenance such a *burlesque* of *Justice*.

The last performance of it closed with an Epilogue, (the joint production of the principle performers) spoken by SIR JOHN WOODHOUSE, which together with the Prologue and Farce itself, is here substituted to the judgment of the Public.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

The Charges Against Colonel Thornton Are Read

The Charges exhibited against, the prisoner, were as follow:

FIRST-"For remaining absent from the 2nd Battalion of the West York Regiment of Militia, after the expiration of his leave of absence; the leave of absence granted being the 26th of July, 1795, and Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton no joining the 2nd Battalion of the West York till the 31st of July, 1795

SECOND-" For having on the 31st of July, 1795 passed along the line of encampment on Barnham Down, in a manner prejudicial to good order and military discipline, by being drawn in a carriage by soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the West York, from the right, or nearly the right of the encampment to the left, where the 2nd battalion of the West York is encamped--the soldiers of occasionally huzzaing—and drawing the carriage between the Stand of the Colors and the Quarter Guards. "

When the above Charges had been read by Lieutenant-General SLOPER, as *Prosecutor*, he asked the PRISONER, whether he was Lieutenant Colonel of the 2nd Battalion of the West York Militia? To which the prisoner answered, I *am*.

The General then asked him, at what time he last joined the 2nd Battalion of the West York Militia? --- The Prisoner said, he arrived at Canterbury on the evening of the 30th of July 1795; but having no bed in his tent, could not go into camp til the morning of the 31st.

FIRST CHARGE

Lord Down *sworn and examined by General* SLOPER.

Did you hear any report of Colonel Thornton being at Canterbury on the evening of the 30th of July?

I received no *official* account of the Colonel's being at Canterbury on the 30th. I received a letter from him on the Tuesday preceding: it stated, that he had set out on the 25th

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

The Charges Against Colonel Thornton Are Read

from London; the before he had got out of town his carriage broke down; and it concluded by requesting that I would state the cause of his absence to General Norton, (commanding at Barnham Down) and as he had assurance from his coach-maker, the carriage could be repaired in a few hours, that he doubted not he should be enabled to join by the following Thursday, To which no objection was made.

By Colonel Thornton

Did your Lordship comply with my request, in stating to Major General Norton the cause of my absence? I shewed the letter to the Major General the morning I received it.

The Evidence for the prosecution on the first Charge was here closed.

SECOND CHARGE

Lord Downe was again called, and being desired by the prosecution to state what he knew of the subject. Of the second charge, deposed as follows. Being informed on Friday, the 31st of July, at three o'clock, that a number of the men of the West York Regiment were assembling on the right of the camp. I immediately went down and found 20 or 30 of the men going up to a carriage I saw on the road, I rode up to the carriage, and perceiving Colonel Thornton in it, begged the Colonel would persuade the men to go home; and said to the men, they should take some other opportunity of shewing their respect; to which Colonel T. replied "*Certainly*" I then ordered the men into their lines; but finding them not ready to obey. I begged the Serjent to see it was done. Col. Thornton the drove on in his carriage, and I remained behind. He had not been gone far before the soldiers went up to the carriage

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

The Charges Against Colonel Thornton Are Read

again; and when they came opposite the camp, they took the horses from the carriage. I rode up again, and after speaking to the men myself, I intreated Col. Thornton to use his endeavors to make them desist; but finding I could not accomplish my wish, Col. Thornton was drawn along the front of the lines to his tent.

The Court adjourned to the next day.

Summary of pages 9 to 19.

[The prosecution continued its case with numerous witnesses testifying that they saw Colonel Thornton being drawn into camp in his carriage by his men after they had removed his horses while they were yelling Huzzah [Hurrah]. Their case was that it was unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman. The prosecutions testimony extends from the remainder of page 8 through pages 19 at which point Colonel Thornton is allowed to question the prosecutions witnesses. The Colonel has admitted to being drawn into camp and the men shouting *Huzzah.*]

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Presents His Defence

(19)

The Evidence for the Prosecution was here closed.

The Prosecutor having closed his evidence, Colonel THORNTON was called on for his defence: He addressed the Court in a suitably pertinent speech, in which he occasionally adverted to the persecution of his former Prosecutors, who, notwithstanding the variety of Charges formerly exhibited against him and which had been the subject of SEVEN Courts Martial, and although he had been honorably acquitted from such charges, still he was pursued by the malignant spirit of jealousy.

After apologizing to the Court, and expressing his sorrow at the frivolity of the charges against him thus, and had detained them so long…

[Colonel Thornton then calls witnesses in defence of the first charge, which continues until through page 24. It is clear that he did inform his superiors that he would be arriving late.]

Colonel Thornton states he has already been subject to <u>SEVEN</u> Court-Martials and was acquitted each time

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Presents His Defence

(25)

SECOND CHARGE

After the Prosecutor's Evidence on the Second Charge exhibited against Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton was concluded, Colonel Thornton addressed the Court as follows:

Mr. President and Gentleman of this Honorable Court,

The evidence in support of my defence to the first Charge being closed, permit me, before I enter upon my evidence to the second, to request your indulgence, for a few minutes only, whilst I state to you the general circumstances of the Defence which I am now about to make.

Gentlemen, it is far from my intention or wish to trespass upon that indulgence which I have liberally experienced from you during the progress of this Trial, by detailing any facts which are not strictly relevant to the Charge now before you; be assured, therefore that I shall carefully avoid urging anything on this occasion that does not immediately hone to the second Charge, and what I know I have clearest and most unquestionable evidence to establish; for I am convinced that a fair and unequivocal statement of the circumstances attending my coming into camp and of my conduct in the midst of those circumstances, is the best defence I can possibly offer---a defence which I have no doubt will impress upon the minds of every Member of this Court, the complete belief and conviction of my innocence.

On the 31st of July last, I was coming from Canterbury in my curricle, accompanied by

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Presents His Defence

Lieutenant Briggs, to join my regiment in this encampment. When we arrived at some little distance from the park of artillery, on the turnpike road, a great number of the soldiers of my regiment were assembled, and drawn up across the road, waiting my arrival, and with intention, I believe, of shewing me some mark of respect. When I came upon them, they received me with evident marks of satisfaction, they then declared, in their rude, but well-intentioned manner, that they would take my horses from the carriage, and draw me into camp. Upon which I remonstrated with them, and told them, that such conduct would be improper; that I was well convinced of their attachment to me; and the best way they could show it on that occasion, would be to walk peaceably on each side of the carriage, and conduct me in that manner to my tent. This the men seemed inclined to do, and I was proceeding in my carriage, when my Lord Downe came riding up, and after the usual salutation had passed between his Lordship and me, his Lordship begged I would persuade the men to disperse: upon which I said, I should do everything in my power to meet his Lordship's wishes. My Lord Downe then rode off from the carriage to my Lord Corke, who was on the ground at some little distance. In the mean time I told the men not to attempt to take my horses from the carriage, as I should not suffer them to draw me. They were permitting me to proceed; and at this time my Lord Downe returned from Lord Cooke, and rode among them and against my curricle with considerable violence.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Presents His Defence

This irritated the men so extremely, that they swore they would not be prevented drawing their Lieutenant-Colonel to this tent; they then snatched the reins from my hands and proceeded to take out the horses. My Lord Downe and myself were doing everything in our power to prevent them; I repeatedly whipped the horses, and I believe some of the men, to prevent me from being drawn, but to no purpose. The horses were then out, and the men drew me along the lines to my marquee, occasionally huzzaing as they proceeded. When I arrived at my tent, I desired the men to disperse quietly and go to their tents, which they *immediately did.*

Thus, Gentleman, have I given you a brief, but faithful detail of the circumstances attending my coming into camp, and of my conduct on that occasion. I shall now proceed to call a number of very respectable witnesses to establish these facts; and having done that, I have no doubt but you will give my defence a fair and impartial consideration, and that you will pronounce that verdict which innocence demands of justice, and which, on this occasion, I am conscious of deserving of –NOT GUILTY.

[Following the Colonel's opening remarks there are 34 pages of actual testimony pages 28 to 61 with the following speech given at the end of the trial].

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Gives His Closing Speech

COURT MARTIAL

COLONEL THORNTON'S SPEECH

Upon the final close of evidence upon this Trial, COLONEL THORNTON addressed the Court in a speech, as nearly as possible to the following effect:

"Mr. President, and Gentleman of the honorable court.

"When I consider the great length to which this Trial has been protracted, the immense mass of tedious and irksome evidence, which has been examined, and the unwearied pains and attention used by you throughout the whole of it, --it would surely be very unbecoming in me to trespass long upon your indulgence by offering any tedious or uninteresting observations which do not naturally result from a review of the nature and circumstances of this trail: Influenced, therefore, by these considerations, it will be my endeavor (as it is sincerely my wish) to keep in unison with the court, by steering clear of every thing that might have a tendency to give uneasiness to your feelings. In the situation, however, in which I stand—brought to trial upon charges which (in my mind) are the slightest, most insignificant, and frivolous, that ever were exhibited against any man; impressed with the strongest suspicion and belief that those charges are the offspring of the illnature and malice of my enemies, and they were transmitted to the General from the same mischievous and malignant motives; serupulously jealous of my honor as an Officer and a Gentleman; and, above all, conscious of my innocence: --in such circumstances, and under such impressions, if, in the course of the observations, which I am now about to offer, any harsh or unguarded expressions should accidently escape me, I am sure the candor of this Court will make me every just and reasonable allowance.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Gives His Closing Speech

As to the First Charge, permit me to observe that I trust I have made it appear, by the clearest testimony, that my not strictly complying with the orders to join my regiment was purely the consequence of an accident, which unfortunately befell me in my hurry of obedience to that order: -—-that, upon the accident happening, I paid every due attention to the Colonel (Lord Downe and to General Norton, by immediately Stating to them, by letter, the cause of my absence and delay: -that, had I not had the most confident assurances from the coach maker, that my carriage would be completely repaired in the course of a few hours, I should have taken another mode of conveyance down to camp: -that I sent my valet, and all my linen, on before me to Canterbury by Lieutenant Brigges, and thereby deprived myself of the use of a servant to attend me, and of the opportunity of a change of linen; which demonstrates my determined intention to join my regiment without delay. But, Gentlemen, these are for from the most material observations which shall have the honour of offering to your consideration: If you consider that, for the space of nineteen months, I have only been a few days at my own home —-that my' private-affairs, and those of the- greatest moment to me, have been, during all that time, almost wholly neglected, and that consequently they are now in a state of the greatest derangement and confusion—-that my estate and fortune have sustained (and still are sustaining) very considerable injuries, on account of my absence; and that all this has been occasioned by my zeal for the military service and the public good: --I say, if those considerations have that weight with you, which I think they ought to have upon the mind of every man who has any stake in this country, you cannot possibly convict me for being absent only four days beyond my time; especially as my services could not be very material, there being two Field Officers then with the regiment. But this is not all: —I will assert boldly, because I am confident of the truth of the assertion, that this trial has given a deep and dangerous wound to the Militia Service. What! Are Country Gentlemen of fortune, who are in the militia service, to be called to a great distance from their homes, even to the different extremities of the kingdom? --Are they to withdraw all attention from their domestic concerns and suffer their estates and fortunes to fall to ruin and decay; —-are they not to be allowed the necessary time to arrange and adjust them? -—-Are they to be treated with the same military severity and rigor as the officers of the regular regiments? —-Are they to be brought to trial for unintentional (and, therefore, the most venial) offences? -—-If so, Militia Officers will abandon the service in disgust and there would soon be an end of our Militia--that best, because it is the molt Constitutional, Defence of this Country.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Colonel Thornton Gives His Closing Speech

Gentlemen, permit me to observe further, that there is a very wide distinction between a Regular and a Militia Officer: The character, the occupation, the profession of the former, is solely that of an *Officer*, and the pay which the state affords him is generally the principal fund of his subsistence; where his regiment is, there is his home—the motto best suited to his character and circumstances is, *Omnia mea mecum porto*! [All that is mine, I carry with me]. How different the character and situation of the latter? -- His genuine and natural character is that of a *Country Gentleman*, who has a stake in the country--who has an estate to superintend and cultivate, the neglect of which becomes ruinous to himself and detrimental to the State: in times of war and danger, he relinquishes his domestic concerns and comforts, steps boldly forward, animated with the spirit of pure and genuine patriotism, and takes up arms in the defence of his King and Country.

In such circumstances, surely some more than common indulgence ought to be allowed to Militia Officers: ——-To treat *them* with severity and rigor, is imprudent and impolitic: it must disgust them, and in the end dissolve our militia--and what then becomes the sole defence of the liberties of Englishman? —-a *standing army*, and *barracks*: springing up like mushrooms in the country! It is true: a standing army is a great and powerful establishment; it carries into execution, with irresistible force, the laws of the Sovereign throughout the empire; but let it be observed, that it may also establish his *tyranny*! —Let it be remembered, that a standing army has been more than once made the instrument to destroy the liberties of a free people—-the standing army of CAESAR destroyed the liberties of *Rome*—that of CROMWELL the liberties of *England*—-that of PISISTRATUS the liberties of *Athens*!

Gentlemen, let me finally observe to you, that we cannot have any permanent security for our liberties without a well-regulated Militia, as it is the barrier between *the riot of the people* and the *tyranny of the Crown*-—as it operates as a counterpoise to the standing army, and thereby maintains equilibrium of military power in the kingdom.

Gentlemen acquit me, then, of those Charges; and show to your country that you are the steady guardians of its Freedom, by being the zealous supporters of the Militia.

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

The Verdict and Sentence

THE VERDICT

"On the day appointed by Lieutenant-General SLOPER and the other Generals, Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON proceeded to camp at eleven o'clock. The West York regiment, after some consultation, were formed into a mathematical figure somewhat resembling a square, by Lord DOWNE, their newly-appointed Colonel; the men were directed to order their arms; a *profound and solemn silence ensued*; and (the Officers being uncovered)

Lieutenant-General Sloper read the charges, and then pronounced the *Sentence of the Court Martial*, nearly in the following words:

"LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THORNTON,

"*It is my duty to inform you that the Court have found you* GUILTY *on* BOTH the CHARGES *exhibited against you, and their* SENTENCE *is*, That you be publicly reprimanded!; *and* I do hereby, *in obedience to their orders*, reprimand you *accordingly*!"

"After which, Lieutenant-Colonel T. with equal solemnity spoke to the following effect:

"Sir, the very elegant and graceful manner in which you have delivered my sentence compels me in gratitude to assure you that I have the highest sense of the honour done me on this occasion: — entertaining the highest esteem and veneration for your professional knowledge, permit me, Sir, to ask you what steps you would advise me to take, should the soldiers of the York regiment, or of any other, from their zeal, be prompted at any future time to pay me a similar compliment, by huzzaing and drawing me into camp or elsewhere?

"Was it to happen to me. Sir, replied GENERAL SLOPER, I would break my neck! — or (agreeable to some present) the reply was, "I would break their necks," meaning the necks of the soldiers.

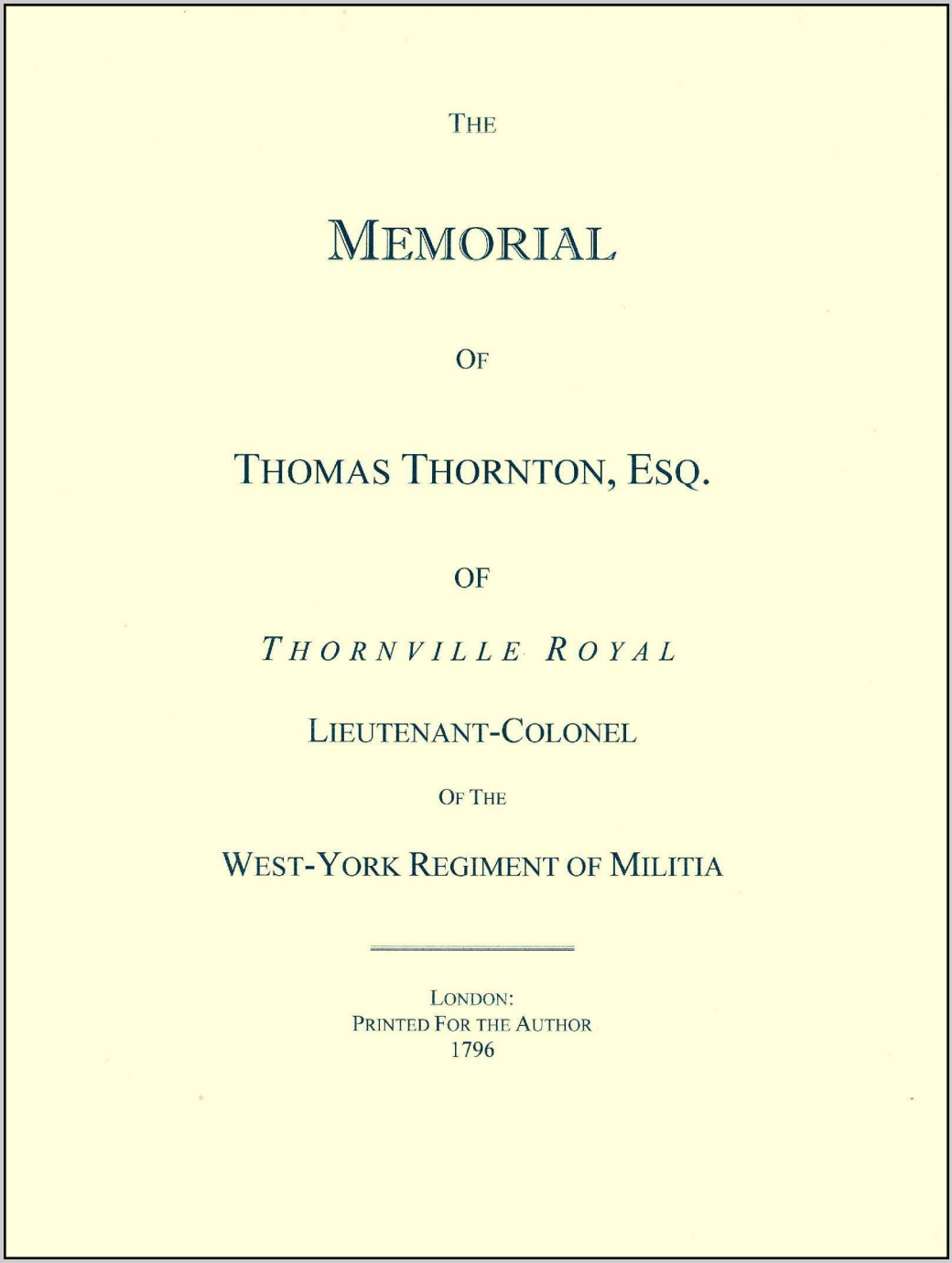
"Excuse me. Sir,' replied Colonel Thornton, "I think that would be carrying the joke a little too far."

Parturiunt Montes nascitur ridiculus Mus.
[Much ado about nothing]

[Colonel Thomas Thornton promptly sent in his resignation and spent the rest of his life pursuing sport and conviviality]

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

The Memorial of Thomas Thornton, Esq.



THE

MEMORIAL

OF

THOMAS THORNTON, ESQ.

OF

THORNVILLE ROYAL

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL

OF THE

WEST-YORK REGIMENT OF MILITIA

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR
1796

This Memorial [a statement of facts] was written and published by Colonel Thornton in the hopes of exonerating himself in the public eye. It contains several affidavits and letters from friends and supporters.

Soldiers Mutiny for a Requirement to Powder Their Hair

[8]

highest military authority, paid little attention to this unprecedented behavior of the Officers of his Regiment; who, urged by the factious ringleaders, now-combined in a mass against him, to force him to comply with their wishes; repeatedly attempted to lessen him in the opinion of the men, ever *steady* to the interest of his family and himself. But disappointed in their deep design, they adopted the mode of attempting to force the soldiers into mutiny: this also being frustrated, his authority was disputed, his orders disobeyed, and himself publicly vilified; not only in the face of his own regiment, but on the grand parade; which the proceedings of the Courts Martial on Lieutenant WADMAN (and others, likely to take place) will sufficiently testify.

That your Memorialist is informed that the said Officers did, clandestinely, some time since, send requisitions, and in particular a memorial, through the hands of General MORRIS, Commander of the camp of Roborough; in order that it should be presented to your MAJESTY; intimating, that unless your Memorialist was dismissed the service, they would resign; and which memorial, Lord George LENOX sent to the Lord-Lieutenant*; the contents of which your

* A disturbance having arisen on the arrival of Lieut. -Colonel THORNTON at Roborough Camp, from soldiers of all the regiments there having complained in bodies to Lieutenant-General Morris, that they were oppressed by their commanding officers, obliged to wear hair powder and no allowance for it, that their pay could scarcely support them: —This, though true, having been represented to the General without having been first stated as a grievance to the Commanding Officer, and enabling him in consequence to give the necessary redress, and contrary to the articles

Colonel Thornton Flogs a Soldier

your Memorialist was unacquainted with, till the last day's sitting of the Court of Enquiry, and of course has been unable to answer it; which your MAJESTY will see, strikes at all command, and is detrimental to the service, contrary to good order and military discipline.

Having stated these facts, fully corroborated by the testimonies of the Court of Enquiry and Courts Martial, beyond the possible power of contradiction;

of war, was construed to be tending to mutiny, by the *approval* of Lieut. -General MORRIS: as an example to the whole Lieut. -Colonel THORNTON ordered a Court-martial to sit on one of his soldiers for that offence, and he was sentenced by the Court to be flogged. Lieut. -Colonel THORNTON stated to the men the danger of allowing military persons to form combinations against their superiors, and how unjust it was through malice by *secretly accusing* those who had no power to defend themselves; and unwilling as he had ever been to inflict punishment, on this occasion, as a public example to crush riot, he could nor in justice to the commission he held avoid it. The sentence being inflicted, with a *manly spirit* the soldier, who was a grenadier, said "Sir, from your representation I see my crime, of which I was ignorant before. I have received, as every soldier should do, a punishment inflicted under your command *as a man*, well knowing that you would not punish unless it was necessary for the good of the service; but I do assure you, Sir, in your absence, for faults the most trivial we have been most *cruelly punished*." The Colonel's answer was, "Silence, this is not the place or time for complaint. I'll hear and redress all *reasonable* grievances properly represented. I punish as the father of the soldiers, from NECESSITY—but I detest oppression." A few days after, unknown to Lieut. -Colonel THORNTON, many of the officers of the York waited on Lieut. -General MORRIS, and presented the memorial alluded to to him, and he, as appears by Lord George LENOX'S evidence on a Court-martial, declares that he sent it to the Duke of NORFOLK, convinced that General MORRIS had apprised Colonel THORNTON that he had received such a Memorial, agreeable to the universal practice of the army. However, on this occasion, the practice differed. The Public being in possession of this fact will judge for themselves.

Colonel Thornton explains the Lieutenant Wadman Incident

from a justification of himself before so honorable a court as a Court of Enquiry. All this has arisen merely from his acting up to that true and proper spirit which a Lieutenant Colonel of a regiment and a field officer of the line ought to maintain; not with a view (as hath been laid to his charge) of breaking in upon good order and discipline.

Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subject,

THOMAS THORNTON.

—Lieutenant WADMAN having been set on to insult Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON upon duty as field-officer of the line; on his desiring him to join his company, parade being ready, he said he would not obey the orders of such a scoundrel: on this the Colonel ordered him to his tent; his answer was, "you are a rascal and a villain, and I will not go to my tent for you." This being said in the streets of the encampment, and repeated on the parade, the Colonel ordered the Adjutant to conduct him to his tent, which he being unable to do, a file of men was called out for that purpose; three files came forward; and on Lieutenant WADMAN drawing his sword, saying he would not be taken, the Colonel ordered the men to secure him: in this scuffle Lieutenant WADMAN wounded himself by rushing on the bayonets; and the enemies of Colonel THORNTON perverted his words, complained to General MORRIS, and pains were taken to obtain a magistrate's warrant to commit him to prison, under a charge of attempting to assassinate an officer. The proceedings of the Court Martial will shew this fully. General MORRIS ordered the nine solders into confinement, kept them confined eight or nine days, without giving in any crime or cause for such confinement, contrary to the articles of war. —Lieut. -Col. THORNTON preferred a charge against Gen. MORRIS for this breach of the Articles of War, and also other charges, and they were acknowledged by the Duke of YORK to have been received, and said before Sir CHARLES MORGAN, Judge Advocate General. —The Public being in possession of this fact will judge as Englishmen for themselves. They were, at the expiration of the eight or nine days, discharged—no charge having been exhibited against them. —The evidence, which will come forward on the trials of the officers now under arrest, will prove that Lieutenant WADMAN was excited, by the cabal, to act as he did.

Colonel Thornton Chides the Newspaper for Misstated Article

In order to prove how the character of a man, however innocent, may be calumniated through those vehicles of abuse, the public prints, the Committee think proper to publish a copy of the paragraph, which was inserted in *The Morning Post* of the 6th of August, and is as follows;

"The following unfortunate circumstances occurred on Sunday evening, the 2nd instant, at Roborough camp, near Plymouth: Lieutenant-WADMAN, of the West Yorkshire Militia, being incensed at the behavior of his Commanding-Officer (Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON), and so inebriated, as to be under no control of reason, nor sense of propriety of conduct, abused Colonel Thornton in the grossest manner, calling him, several times, Scoundrel! Rascal! and Villain! and insisted that the Colonel should meet him the next morning on the public regiment parade, before the men: the Colonel then drawing, his sword, brandished it at Mr. WADMAN, and ordered him under an arrest. Mr. WADMAN drew his sword, but offered no violence to the Colonel, yet refused to obey him. Colonel THORNTON then directed the Adjutant to order out a file of men to force Mr. WADMAN to the quarter-guard; but the men appearing very unwilling to proceed to extremities with Mr. WADMAN, the Colonel immediately ordered men

Colonel Thornton Chides the Newspaper for Misstated Article

of his own company to come forward; some of whom then ran to their tents for their arms, and proceeded regularly to the place directed by the Colonel, who repeated several times, in the hearing of the regiment, "Seize him!" (supposed to mean Mr. WADMAN), "damn him! run him through!" The soldiers then run Mr. WADMAN through the throat with their bayonets, and dangerously wounded him in several places, and his life is at present despaired of.

The above false and infamous paragraph unfortunately reached the Colonel's family before a true state of the transaction was known to them; and which, though perfectly proved to be untrue at the Court Martial, yet the Colonel's family and friends suffered as he did, in the opinion of strangers, by this willful misrepresentation; and instead of the thanks which he ought to have received for his cool and collected conduct, he was absolutely marked at to strangers as an assassin.

A Letter of Support for Colonel Thornton Over the Lt. Wadman Incident

[36]

COPY of a LETTER inserted in several London Newspapers, and also in *The Exeter Flying-Post of Jan. 29, 1795.*

To the PRINTERS.

London, Dec. 30, 1794,
George's Coffee-house, Coventry-street.

Mr. Editor,

"THINKING it a duty incumbent on every man of honor, and well-wisher to mankind, to destroy fiction in the bud, has induced me, from accidental situation (perfectly uninterested in the event), attending only to facts, to become the faithful recorder of *Truths* which as yet have never met the public eye, but under a mask of *malicious insinuation*, highly prejudicial to the character and honor of Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON (of the York Regiment), and how much his conduct to Lieutenant W------- of the same regiment, on the evening of the third of August, has been misstated to the world, the following must, clearly prove to the feelings and satisfaction of every one."

A Letter of Support for Colonel Thornton Over the Lt. Wadman Incident

"It has been stated in several London papers, that Lieutenant Colonel THORNTON had, in the heat of passion, been the means of depriving Lieutenant W-- of life. That Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON did order a party of soldiers to surround Lieutenant W-- when he was in a *state of riot and mutiny*, with his *sword drawn*, bidding defiance to his Commanding-Officer, and threatening *immediate death* to the first man that should come near him, in opposition to all laws, *civil* and *military*; and that Lieutenant W---was *wounded* by his own intemperance, in the shuffle that took place between him and this party of soldiers, *is true*! but that Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON exhibited any signs, either of *passion*, *spite*, *malevolence*, or *ill-will*, against Lieutenant W-- , *is as untrue* ! on the contrary, it appeared to me and many other *old officers*, by all the evidence produced on Lieutenant W------s Court-martial (*who so far from being butchered by the Lieutenant-Colonel, as has been* INDUSTRIOUSLY CIRCULATED, *has been tried and dismissed the service*), that Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON'S conduct was perfectly cool and gentleman-like; and it is not only my opinion, but that of every old military character, that *very few* officers would, in Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON'S situation, have conducted themselves with that *decided firmness* and deliberate coolness which he did.

A Letter of Support for Colonel Thornton Over the Lt. Wadman Incident

"If the sincere attachment of every individual soldier in a regiment, to one officer in particular, can reflect honor, or give pleasure to that officer, I must congratulate Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON on the satisfaction he must feel, in that of every soldier of his regiment, whose sincerity and affection (I am authentically informed) has demonstrated itself in the *most* EXTRAVAGANT *marks of joy and pleasure* on his return to his regiment; and whenever he has visited any of their winter quarters. And not only the soldiers, but the *inhabitants*, taught by the soldiers to venerate Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON, have joined and vied with them in shewing the Lieutenant Colonel every mark of sincere esteem and respect.

I should not have troubled you with so long a letter (being but little known to Colonel THORNTON), had I not thought his conduct did him *honor as a man*, and *credit as an officer*, except the inducement of preventing the malevolence of a great many people, who, though utter strangers to Lieutenant-Colonel THORNTON'S person or character, from a cruel infatuation *not to be accounted for, secretly violate and injure his reputation*; and to such a height had this envenomed slander arose, that I saw a paper, signed by Lieut.-Col. THORNTON, sticking up in the court-martial room at Plymouth, offering an *hundred guineas reward* for the discovery of any of his calumniators; but such is

A Letter of Support for Colonel Thornton Over the Lt. Wadman Incident

the vitiated character of mankind, that this secret *assassinating power* was never discovered; at least I have never heard of such an event, the which would give great satisfaction (as it ought to do to all good men) to

Your humble servant,

C. B.

An old impartial Officer,

And one of a committee of officers determined to have justice done to merit; and to whom any letter addressed, directed to the care of Men TREWMAN and SON, Exeter, will be duly answered."

An Elucidation of the Mutinous Conspiracy

AN ELUCIDATION

OF

A MUTINOUS CONSPIRACY

ENTERED INTO BY

THE OFFICERS

OF

THE WEST YORK REGIMENT OF MILITIA

AGAINST THEIR COMMANDING OFFICER

IN THE YEAR 1794

DEDICATED (*SANS PERMISSION*)

TO HIS ROTAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF YORK

BY THOMAS THORNTON, ESQ,

LATE LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THAT REGIMENT

FIAT JUSTITIA, RUAT CÆLUM

LONDON:

Printed by J. Bateson, Denmark Street, Soho

1800

This is a later attempt by the Colonel to explain the actions that led to his resignation. It contains numerous letters and supporting documents

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

An Elucidation of the Mutinous Conspiracy

The battle is not always to the STRONG

Tis mostly by the WEAKER won :

----------It is not all along

Quite so certain as a GUN !

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Dedication to His Royal Highness The Duke of York

DEDICATION

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUKE OF YORK,

FIELD MARSHALL & COMMANDRER IN CHIEF OF
THE BRITISH ARMY

Sir,

IN dedicating the following documents to your Royal Highness, I certainly deviate from the principle, by which the writers of dedication are commonly actuated; for I mean neither to convey a compliment, nor to offer an affront; --to court favor, or solicit patronage: Nor have I any object in my contemplation, that needs your support; or that your upmost power can impede.

My purpose, Sir is to manifest to my friends,---to the Public,---and particularly

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Dedication to His Royal Highness The Duke of York

(iv)

to the County of York; that my conduct, for more than twenty years as Lieutenant Colonel of the York Regiment of Militia, was honorable to myself, beneficial to my country, and conductive to the good of the service: that my professional character notwithstanding hath barely been traduced; my efforts to obtain justice, have been frustrated, or over-ruled; and the grossest violations of military discipline subordination screened *because the delinquents were prosecuted* by me!

--That I have been harassed with frivolous and vexatious prosecutions, as repugnant to the maxims, and principles of military jurisprudence as they were injurious and oppressive to me: -that the long services— the *steady, active* and DISINTERESTED attachment, manifested by my father and myself, both in the last and present reign, to your August Family; were overlooked, or forgotten, in the late appointment of a Colonel to the York regiment of Militia;

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Dedication to His Royal Highness The Duke of York

(v)

and my pretentions to that honor, treated (*as is well known to your* ROYAL HIGHNESS) with the most contemptuous and unbecoming disregard-that I was *forced* to retire from a service, to which my personal exertions, and a considerable portion of my fortune, had been assiduously and efficaciously devoted for more than THIRTY YEARS: and lastly, that, *through the same unbenign influence* which assailed me in such various points, I was invidiously represented-in direct opposition to the avowed principles, and uniform tenor, both of my public and private conduct -as a favor of republicanism; -and stigmatized with the odious and ignominious appellation of *Jacobine*.

Being utterly unconscious of having, by any means, provoked, to warranted such desperate attempts to dishonor me; and being left, in a great degree, to conjecture,

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Dedication to His Royal Highness The Duke of York

(vi)

concerning the *instigator* of these outrageous and *unprecedented* proceedings: I shall merely relate the facts and circumstances as they arose: trusting, however, that they will clearly prove the positions I have advanced; and fully justify my submitting my case to the judgment of the Public.

The liberty of addressing myself, on this occasion to your Royal Highness, was induced by an opinion of its *propriety*: because the grievances I allege were sustained in a military capacity; -because they are of a nature of the most fatal to the good order, and even the existence, of a service. –Which affords to your Royal Highness such an ample field for the display of your military talents! your official abilities! and your patriotic zeal!-- and because I must *presume* that your sanction to the indignities I have specified, was obtained *through the vilest*

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document.

Dedication to His Royal Highness The Duke of York

(vii)

misrepresentation;---or that your official authority had audaciously used against me, *without your privity*; For to think otherwise, would be inconsistent with the sentiments of respect and veneration, which illustrious birth and high station-*when accompanied with correspondent virtues*-irresistibly excite; and of which no man is more susceptible than,

Sir,

Your Royal Highness's

Most Obedient and

Most Humble Servant,

T. Thornton

THORNVILLE-ROYAL,
JUNE 30, 1800

This transcription of the court-martial is presented in a format to resemble the original document

A Sporting Tour Through France in 1802

The Engraved Title Page

The beautiful engraved title page depicting a French wolf, one of the animals hunted on the tour.

Literature

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Tours Revealed An Unknown Scotland and a New Emerging France

A Sporting Tour of France in 1802

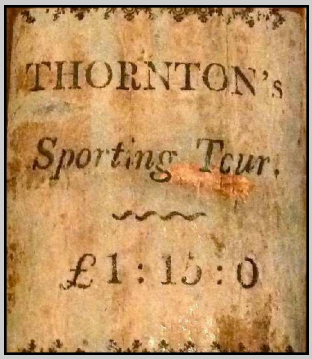
Colonel Thornton's Frontispiece Portrait

Colonel Thornton along with Alicia and his entire sporting entourage made a "Sporting Tour" to France during an interlude in the Napoleonic Wars. The sporting activities were likely an excuse to pursue support from Napoleon for his position that he was treated unfairly in his court-martial. He was able to meet and visit with Napoleon upon an introduction from Napoleon's General Duroc and presentation of a set of highly decorated three barrel pistols. Napoleon was generally sympathetic and inquired about the medal he was wearing, "The Triumph of Truth". It is interesting to note that from 1804 forward Colonel Thornton's bookplate bore the image of a mole thought to symbolize his support for the French. His support for the French did not endear him with his English countrymen who would eventually defeat Napoleon at Waterloo after which the Colonel moved to France and attempted to gain citizenship.

A Sporting Tour of England and Scotland-1804

Sporting Tour of Northern Parts of England and the Highlands of Scotland-1804

Colonel Thornton is credited with making the sporting public aware of the opportunities in the "wilds" of Scotland. The Sporting Tours of Northern England and Scotland is a synopsis of multiple tours in the 1780's before he moved into Thornville Royal in 1789. The exact dates and number of tours are not known but is presented here as a single excursion. He took two of his closest hunting companions Mr. Parkhurst and Mr. Serle along with him, both of whose names appear on the Silver Gilt urn presented to the Colonel upon his retirement from the Falconer's club. The Colonel was also one of the first to "camp" along the way as he made his way north with limited accommodations along the way. He pursued all game by fishing, gun, dogs and falcons.

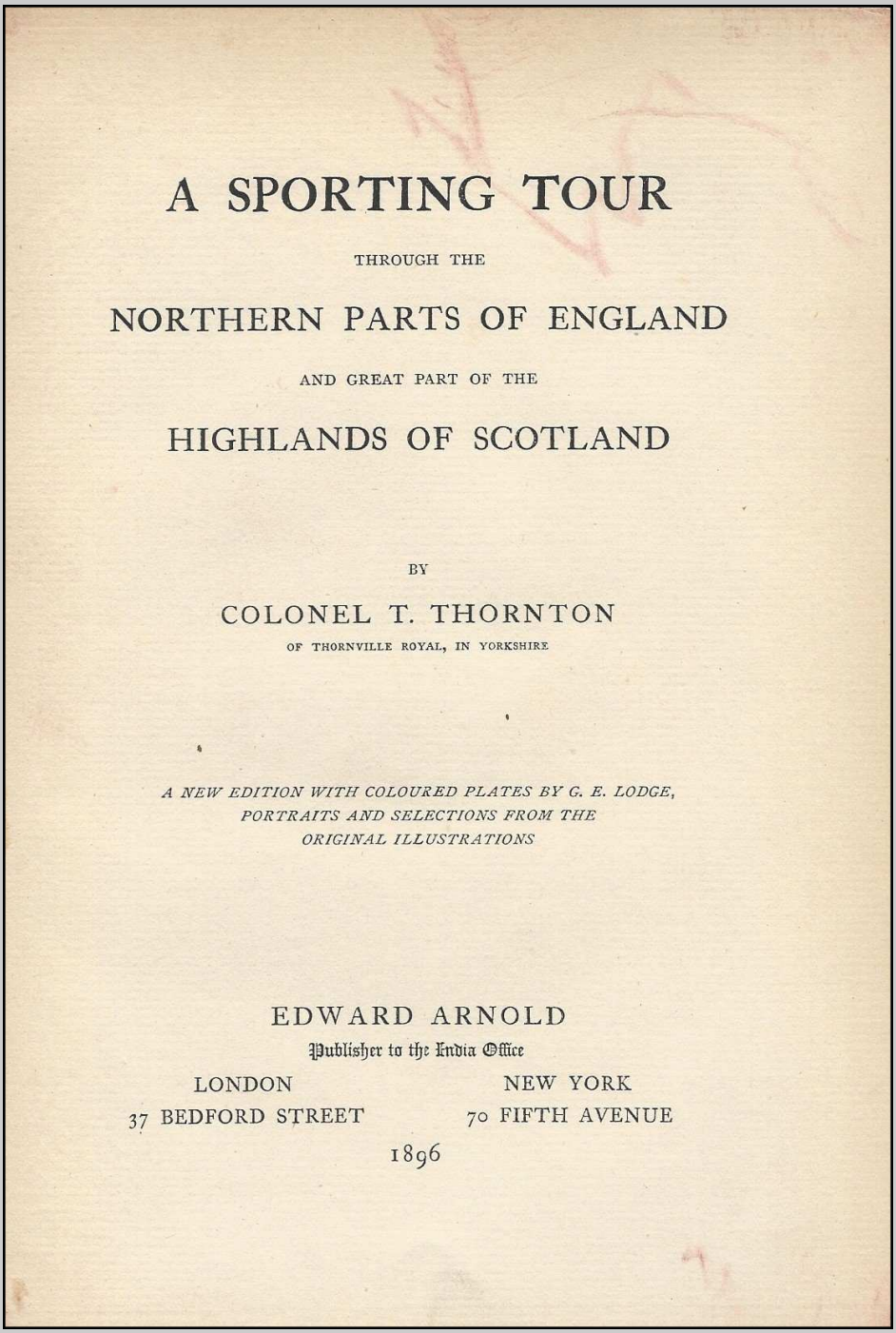


A Rare Copy of Thornton's Tour

Occasionally, copies of antique books are found in the same original state as they were issued. This copy once belonging to famed book collector C.F.G.R. Schwerdt as well as John Roland Abbey, also a well known collector. The booksellers original price label is still in place. Schwerdt's bookplate is also depicted along with the price label.

Courtesy: Rocky Montgomery

A Sporting Tour of England and Scotland-1896



A SPORTING TOUR

THROUGH THE

NORTHERN PARTS OF ENGLAND

AND GREAT PART OF THE

HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

BY

COLONEL T. THORNTON

OF THORNVILLE ROYAL, IN YORKSHIRE

A NEW EDITION WITH COLOURED PLATES BY G. E. LODGE, PORTRAITS AND SELECTIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

EDWARD ARNOLD

Publisher to the India Office

LONDON 37 BEDFORD STREET

NEW YORK 70 FIFTH AVENUE

1896

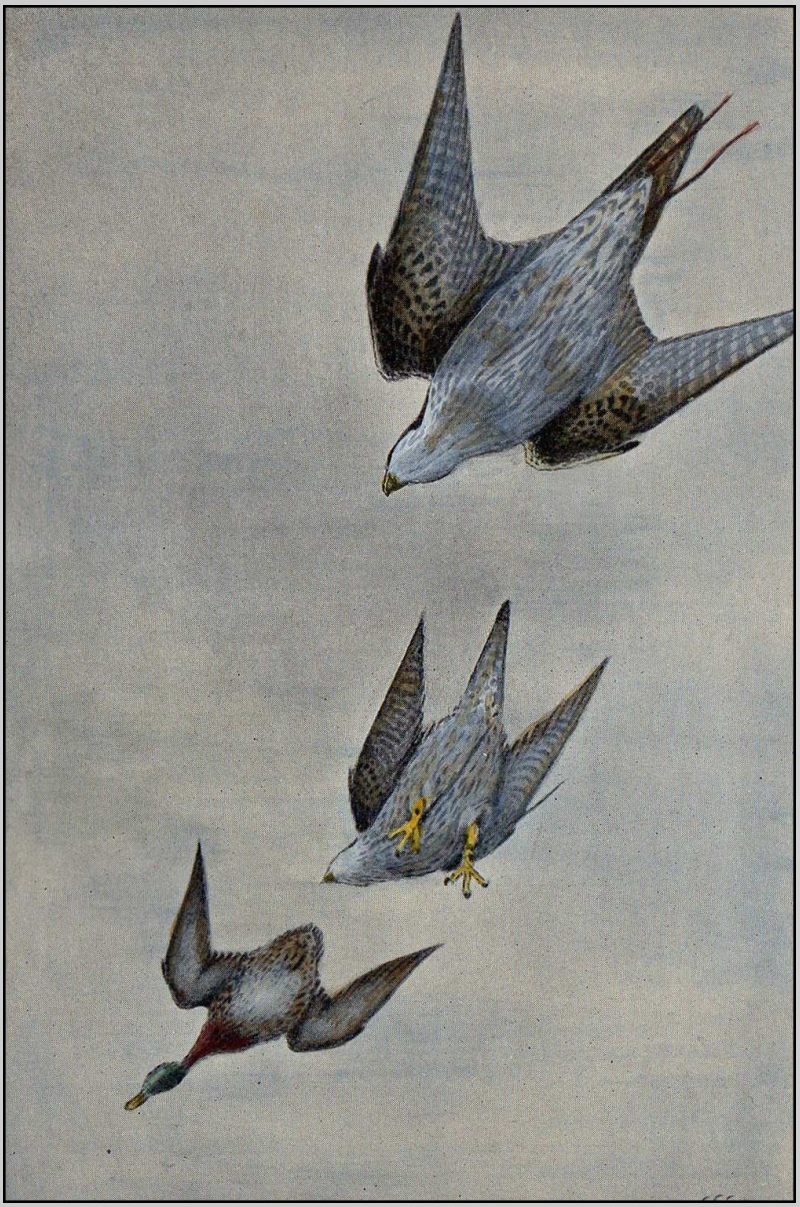
The Title Page

A Sporting Tour of England and Scotland-1896

George Lodge ***In the Woods of Moy*** 1896

© George Edward Lodge Trust

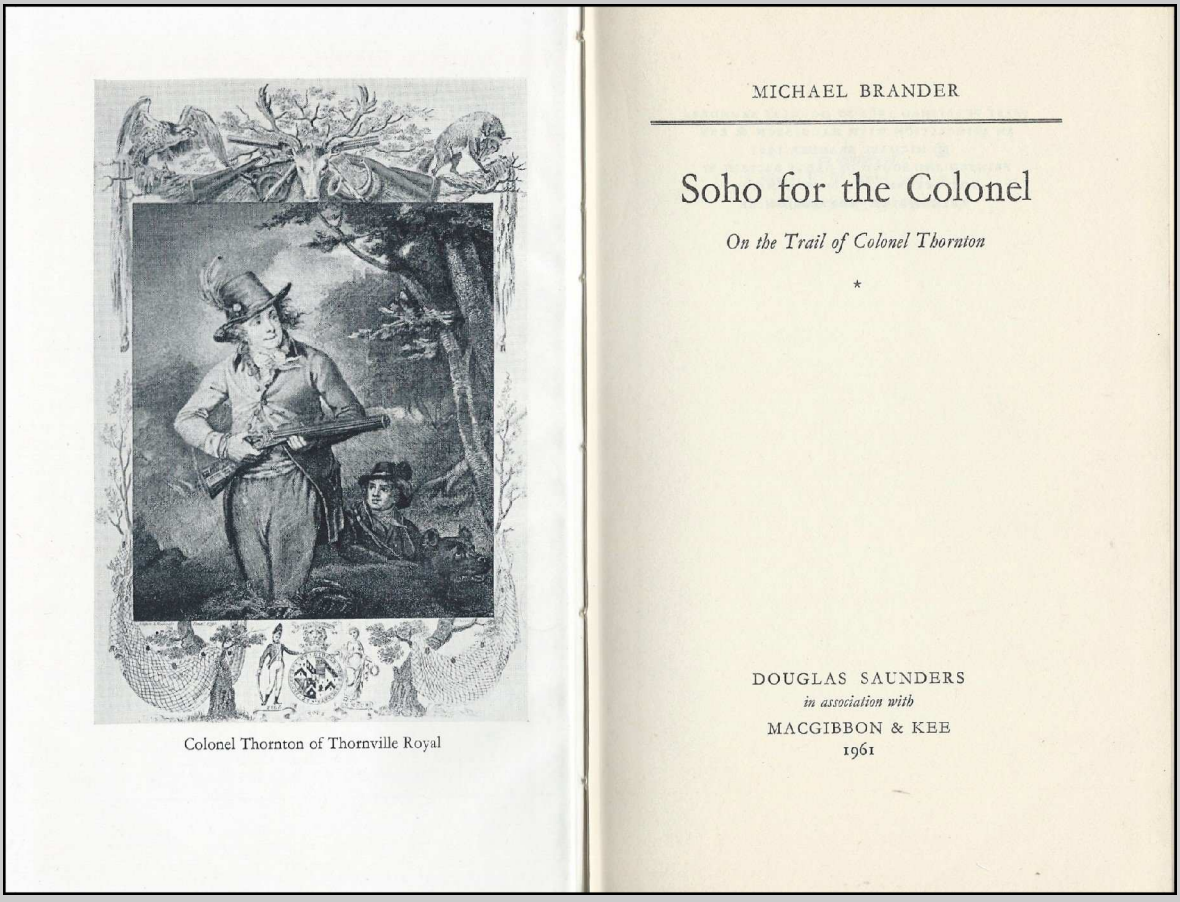
A Sporting Tour of England and Scotland-1896



George Lodge ***Mallard Pressed by Falcons*** *1896*

© George Edward Lodge Trust

Soho for the Colonel -1961



Colonel Thornton of Thornville Royal

MICHAEL BRANDER

Soho for the Colonel

On the Trail of Colonel Thornton

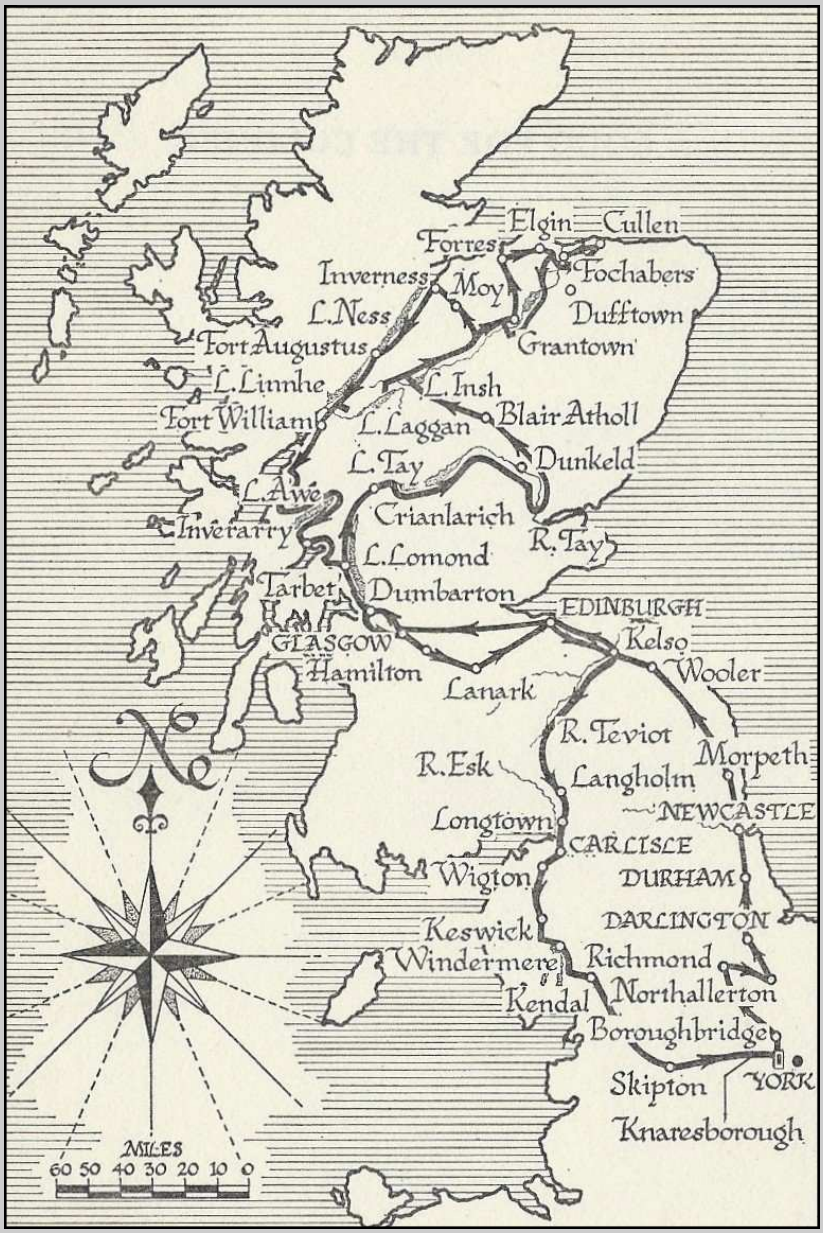
*

DOUGLAS SAUNDERS
in association with
MACGIBBON & KEE
1961

Frontispiece and Title Page

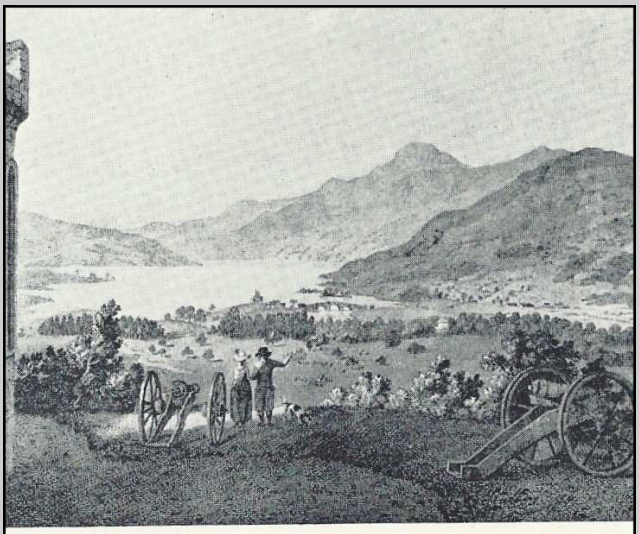
Soho is a shortened form of Sohowee, a cry of encouragement given to the hounds when they take up the scent of the game they are pursuing.

Soho for the Colonel-1961

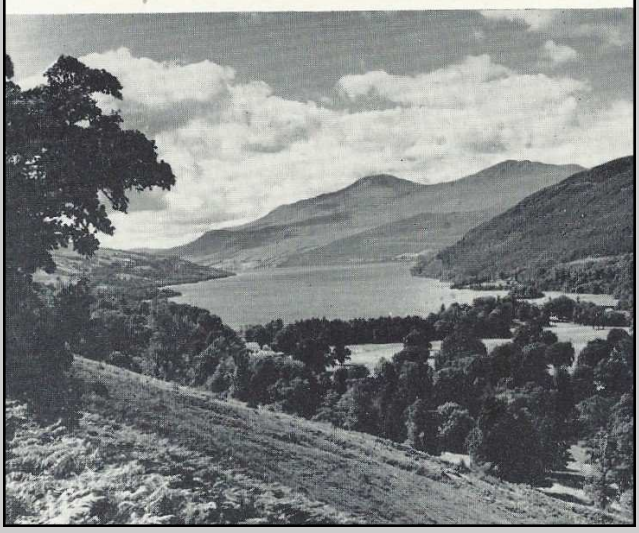


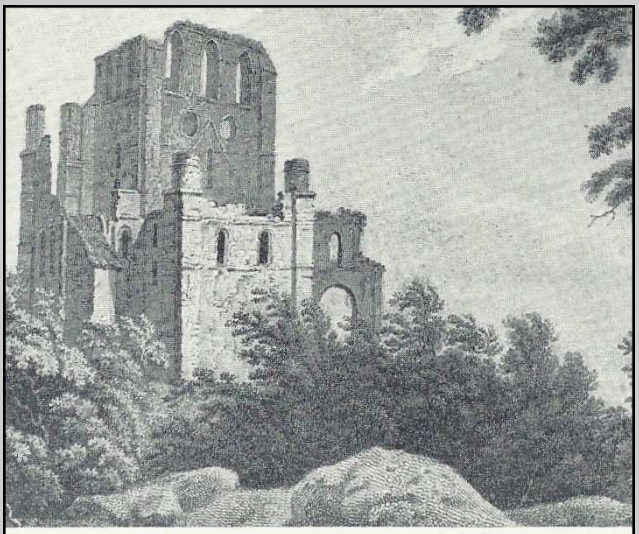
The Tour Route
Taken by Michael Brander and Colonel Thornton
Drawn by Miss Mary Browning and taken from
A Hunt Around the Highlands- 1973.

Soho for the Colonel-1961

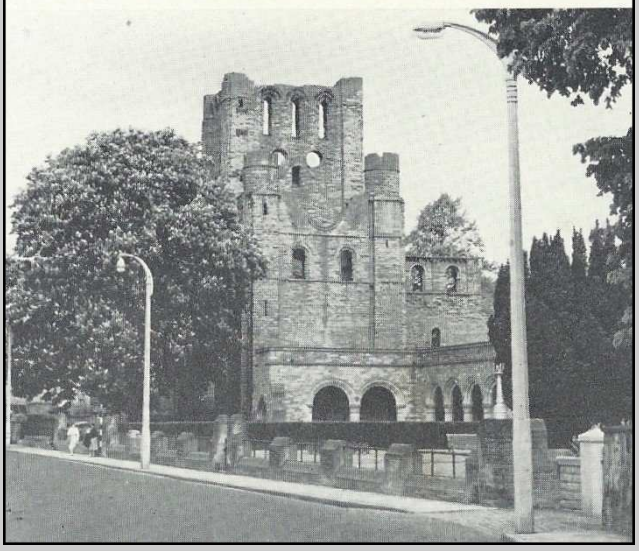


Above: Taymouth, *circa* 1784 by Garrard.
Below: Taymouth, 1959 (note afforestation).



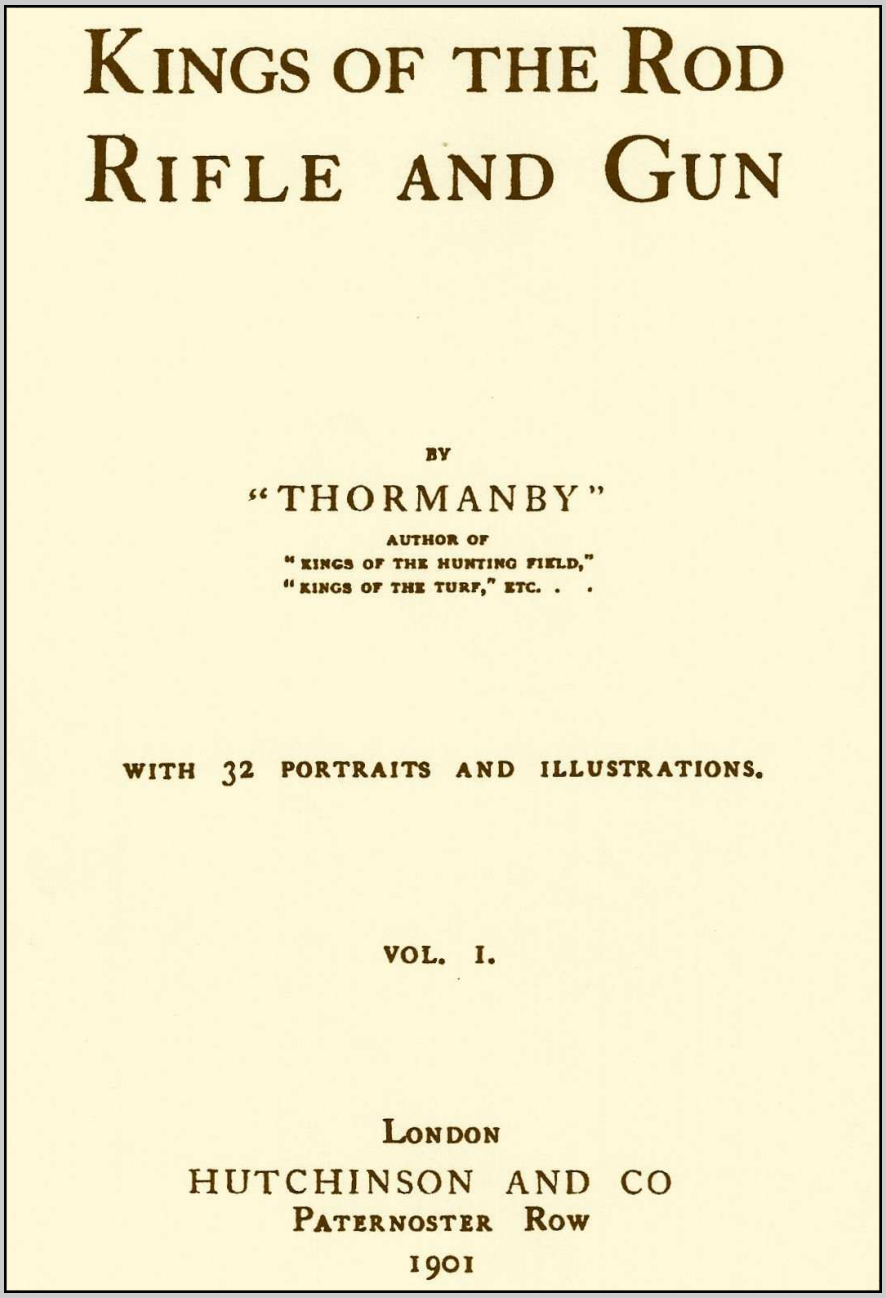


Above: Kelso Abbey, *circa* 1784 by Garrard.
Below: Kelso Abbey today.



Soho for the Colonel
A comparison of the same viewpoint 150 years apart.

Colonel Thornton Biography



KINGS OF THE ROD
RIFLE AND GUN

BY
"THORMANBY"
AUTHOR OF
"KINGS OF THE HUNTING FIELD,"
"KINGS OF THE TURF," ETC. . .

WITH 32 PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

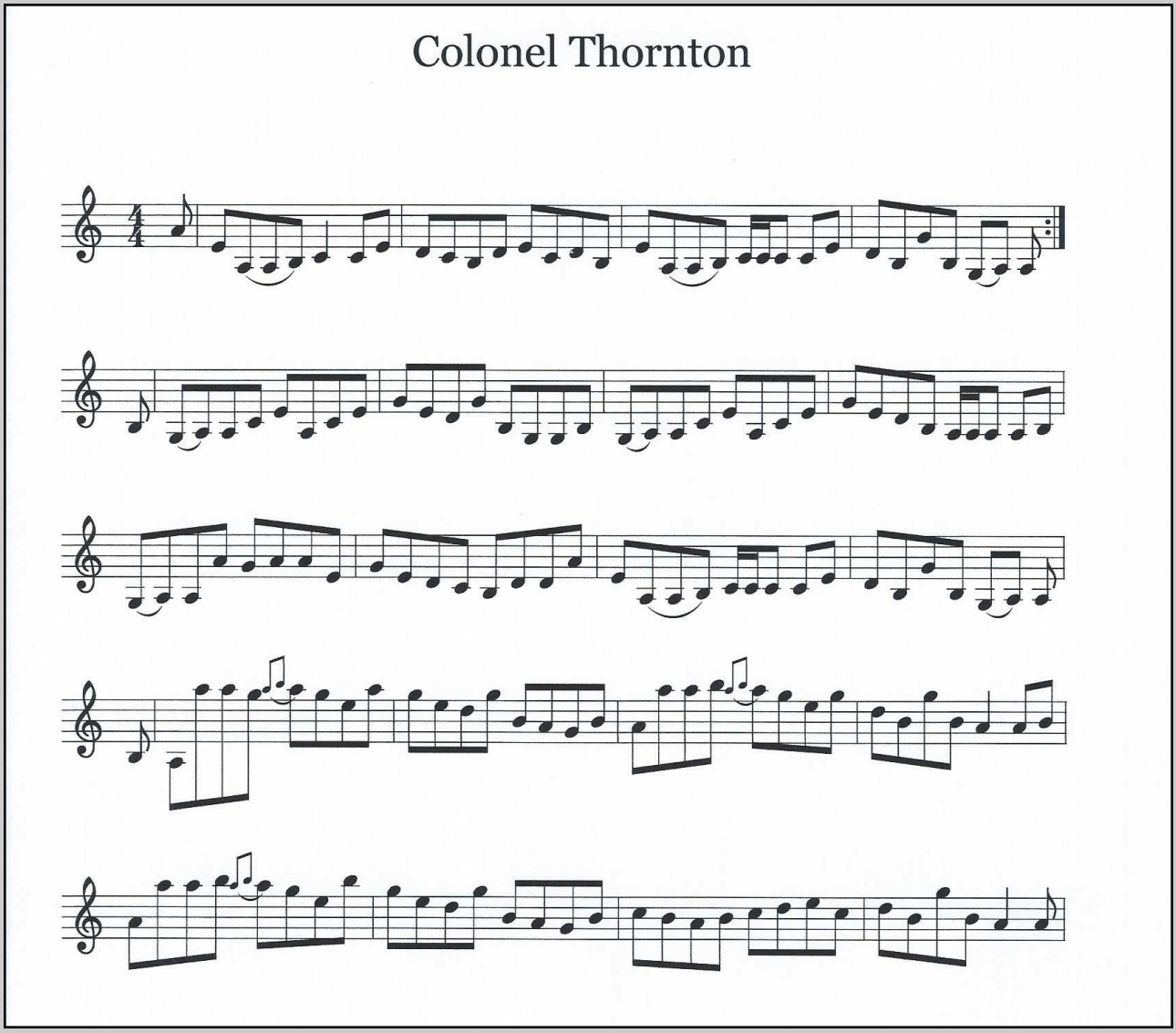
VOL. I.

LONDON
HUTCHINSON AND CO
PATERNOSTER ROW
1901

Colonel Thomas Thornton Biography

Willmont Willmont-Dixon wrote under the nom de plume "Thormanby" and penned biographies of 32 notable sportsmen. His 1901 edition of *Kings of the Rod Rifle and Gun* gives the 20th century reader an in-depth look at the 18th century sportsman Colonel Thomas Thornton. It is the most recent comprehensive look at the life of Colonel Thomas Thornton and was used extensively in this work.

Colonel Thornton Strathspey-A Dance



Colonel Thornton's Strathspey 1788

It is not surprising that the numerous sporting tours to Scotland by Colonel Thornton would result in a Scottish Highland dance utilizing Colonel Thornton's name. This type of dance is named after the Strathspey region of Scotland, in Moray and Badenock and Strathspey. It was originally conceived for the fiddle and was a familiar style of dance in Scottish community dancing. Colonel Thornton is still a popular tune in Nova Scotia (New Scotland) on Cape Breton Island.

Addenda

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Auction Catalogues

It is fortunate that many items once owned by Colonel Thomas Thornton frequently appear for sale at the world's auction houses. Modern printing techniques allow these auction houses to illustrate in full color providing the casual reader a glimpse of the quality and beauty of the items for sale. The following catalogs were used to provide images for this biography.

Bonhams

1. *Antique Arms and Armour*. Thursday April 6th, 2006 Knightsbridge.
   a. Lot 396- Colonel Thornton's Gift to Napoleon.
2. *The Owston Collection*. Friday 25 and Saturday 26, June 2010 Sydney.
   a. Lot 1233-Thornton Roebuck Shooting in the Forest of Glenmore.
3. *Fine Antique Arms and Armour*. Wednesday November 30, 2011.
   a. Lot 556-Gold Inlaid 40 Bore Flintlock Dueling Pistols.

Christie's

1. *Fine Antique Firearms from the W. Keith Neal Collection*. October 25th, 2001. London.
   a. Lot 12-A 16-bored Percussion Sporting Gun made for Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Thornton.
   b. Lot 165. A Cased Pair of 28 bore Percussion Pistols made for Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Thornton by Joseph Manton ca. 1794.
2. *Property from the Estate of His Royal Highness The Prince Henry, The Duke of Gloucester, KG., KT. KP.* Thursday January 26th and Friday 27 January, 2006.
   a. Lot 739-*A Sporting Tour of France in the year 1802*, 1806.
3. *Sporting and Wildlife Art*. Wednesday 3 December 2008.
   a. Lot 61-Sawrey Gilpin-Three greyhounds in an extensive landscape. 1783
4. *The Irish and Sporting Art Sale*. May 8th, 2009.
   a. Lot 94-A Bay Hunter jumping a fence, with a huntsman, in the grounds of Spye Park. Wiltshire by Henry Bernard Chalon 1770-1849.
   b. Lot 101-Sawrey Gilpin 1773-1807. Colonel Thornton's Jupiter, by Eclipse out of a Mare by Tartar, by a fence. With a grey mare, at Thornville Royal. Painted 1792.

Czerny's

1. *The Great Spring Sporting Sale of Fine Scarce Antique Arms.* Armour and Militaria, May 26th, 2013.
   a. Lot 1194-An Important Target Rifle Owned by Lt. Colonel Thornton.

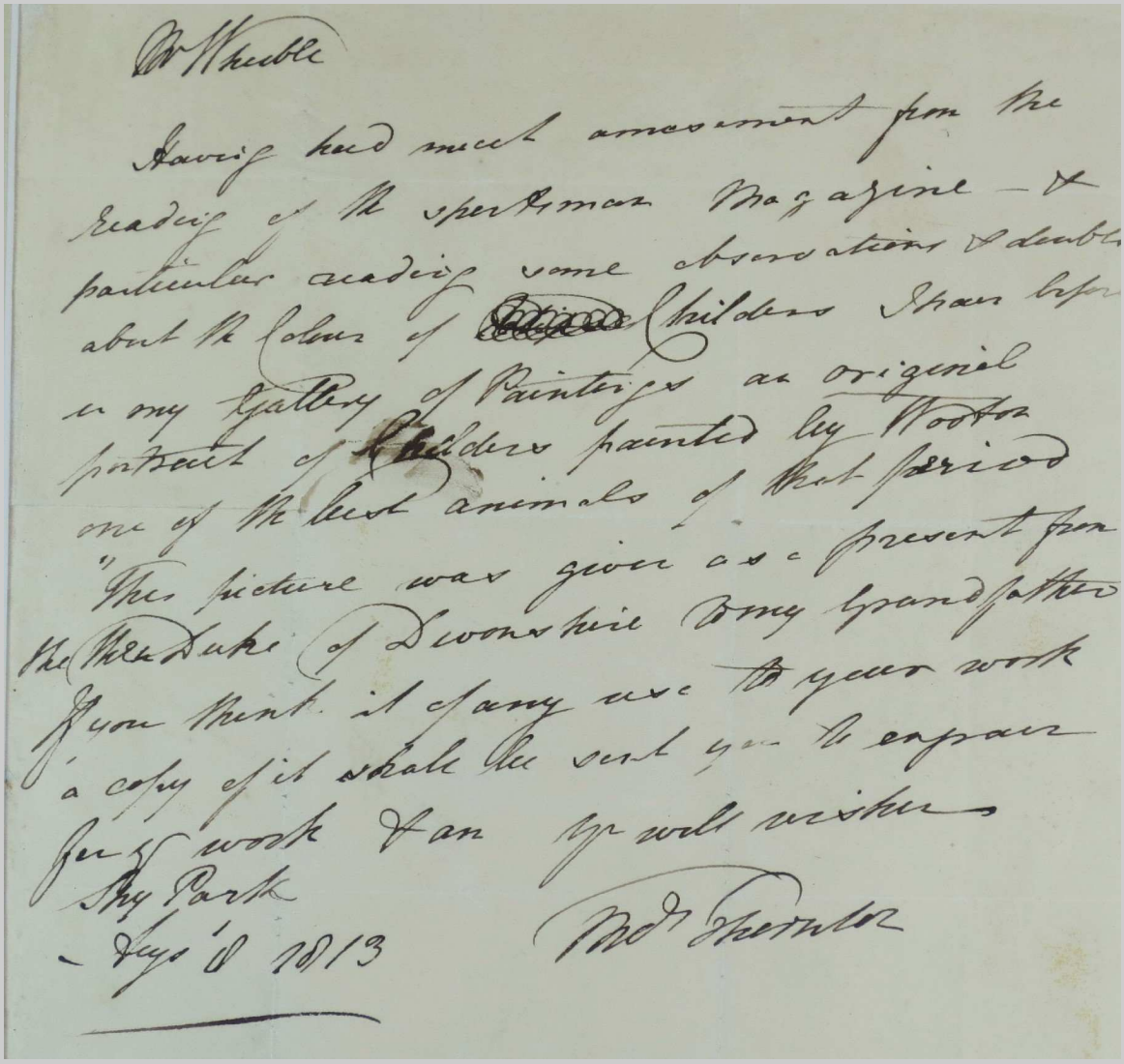
Auction Catalogues

Finer 1. *Peter Finer Catalogue No. 8* [2007].
a. Lot 30-A Fine and Important English Cased Flintlock Seven-Barrel Volley Rifle by Henry Nock. London, 1796.

Skinner
1. *American and European Paintings & Prints*.
a. Lot 362-Pero, Son of Pluto by Reinagle.

Sotheby's
1. *Important Old Masters Paintings.* New York Galleries Thursday, January 20,1983.
a. Lot 8-Colonel Thornton Roebuck Shooting in the Forest of Glenmore.
2. *The Racing Sale-London*. Wednesday November 13, 1996.
a. Lot 290-An engraved commemorative Racing Goblet. (Mrs. Thornton).
3. *Important Silver, Russian Works of Art and Objects of Vertu.* October 25th, 2000.
a. Lot 309-Thornton's Silver Gilt tea Urn.
4. *The Sporting Sale*. Olympia London, November 18th, 2003.
a. Lot 19.-Two Spaniels on the Moors by Philip Reinagle.
5. *British and Sporting Paintings.* New York May 27th, 2004.
a. Lot. 201-Colonel Thornton's two Celebrated Greyhounds. (Czarina and Maria) By Philip Reinagle.
6. *Important British Paintings 1500-1850*. November 22, 2007.
a. Lot. 46-Thornton *Heron Hawking* by Gilpin.
7. *A Celebration of The English Country House*. New York, April 26th, 2008.
a. Lot 227-A George III silver Gilt basket Presentation Epergne.
8. *The Sporting Sale-Equestrian, Wildlife and Maritime Art.* New York, December 3, 2008
a. Lot 46-Ambrosio, a bay Stallion
9. *Important Furniture, Ceramics, Clocks, Silver & Vertu.* London, December 7, 2010.
a. Lot 37-A Gold and Enamel Snuff Box, Guidon, Gide, Geneva, 1792-1801.
10. *Old Master & 19th Century European Art.* New York January 28th 2011.
a. Lot 133-Colonel Thornton's Hound Lucifer in a Scottish Landscape by Garrard.

A Personal Signed Letter From Colonel Thornton



Mr Wheble

Having had much amusement from the
reading of the Sportsman Magazine – &
particular reading some observations & doubts
about the colors of Childers I have hope
in my Gallery of Paintings an original
portrait of Childers painted by Wootton
one of the best animals of that period
The picture was given as a present from
the late Duke of Devonshire to my Grandfather
If you think it of any use to your work
a copy of it shall be sent you to compare
for your work I am your well wisher

Spy Park
Sept 10 1813

Tho Thornton

Letter to John Wheble of the Sporting Magazine

Mr. Wheble, Having had with much amusement from the reading of the Sportsman Magazine and particular reading some observations & doubts about the colors of Childers. I have in my gallery of paintings an original portrait of Childers painted by Wooten one of the best animals of that period. The picture was given as a present from the Duke of Devonshire to my grandfather. If you think of any use to your work a copy shall be sent to you to compare for your work. I am your well wisher. Thomas Thornton Spy Park, Sept 10 1813.

The specific portrait of "The Noted Childers" Colonel Thornton is referring to was part of his sporting art sale and may be found in this work in that section.

Colonel Thornton's Birth Year

Without an actual birth record in a parish register, it is impossible to determine the Colonel's accurate age for the purposes of a biography. However, there are several actual dates and anecdotes, which help narrow his birth year. Here are several that help narrow down the actual year.

Mary Thornton (Myster) (1716-1800) (the Colonel's mother).
Mary Thornton's tomb in St Martin, Allerton Mauleverer (previously Thornville Royal), North Yorkshire indicates that she died in 1800 at the age of 84 making her birth year 1716. She married William Thornton (his second marriage) on July 11, 1749 at 33 years of age. It is unlikely that they had any children before marriage but also likely that she could have been pregnant. The earliest and likeliest birth year for any children would be 1749.

Mary Barlow (Thornton) (1749- 1842) Colonel Thorntons older sister.
Mary Barlow (Thornton) was unknown until recently when genealogical records added her to their rolls (*Family Search Community Trees*). She married Samuel Francis Barlow about 1770 and had 11 children. Samuel Francis Barlow served with Colonel Thomas Thornton in the Yorkshire West 2 Militia as Commander of one of the ten companies. Her exact death date is recorded as 13 November 1842 aged 93 so her birth year is calculated as 1749 making her the Colonel's older sister.

This would certainly make Colonel Thornton's birth year before 1750 unlikely and several age references in anecdotal stories would lead a researcher to give credence to the Dictionary of National Biography 2004-12 dates of 1751/52 as the most likely. This reference also indicates that he entered Glasgow University in 1766, which would make him about 14 if born in 1752. This age is referenced in one of his biographies as the date he went to Glasgow. Another states his father died in 1769 when he was 19 making the birth year about 1750/51 depending on the actual months. Another states his mother took care of the family estates until he became of age (21) at which time he left Glasgow (1771). He founded the Falconer's Club in 1772 when he would have been 21 if he had been born in 1751.

These inferences and anecdotal references would lean toward a birth year of 1751 more than 1752 but not enough to exclude 1752 for now.

The Sporting Magazine or Monthly Calendar of the Transactions of the Turf, the Chase, and every other Diversion Interesting to the Man of Pleasure, Enterprise, & Spirit. Vol 29, 1807 on page 249 indicates that a letter reporting the death of the Colonel's sister was opened and necessarily read. This would have to be another sister as Mary lived until much later.

The newest edition of British National Biographical Dictionary also recognizes Colonel Thornton's birth year as 1751/52.

Birth Year of Thornvilla Diana Rockingham Thornton

The birth year of Thornvilla (after Thornville) Diana (after the Roman Goddess of the Hunt) Rockingham (after his father's friend Lord Rockingham with whom he served in 1745) has most often been stated to be 1801. I believe that more recent information will change the birth year to 1817. Here are the reasons for the change.

Tipped into Captain Salvin's personal copy of *Falconry in The British Isles* is a letter from Diana's only son and heir Albert Thornton Wodehouse dated 1885. He states in his letter that his mother Diana died in 1884 and that she was only 6 when her father died in 1823. This would have made her 67 at the time of her death. and thus her birth year 1817. Colonel Thornton drew up his will in 1818 leaving most of his possessions to Diana and almost nothing to his legal son, William. This would result in a lawsuit in England and France brought by his only legal wife Elizabeth Cawston (*Thornton vs Curling*).

Diana (as she preferred to be called) married Admiral Hon. Edward Thornton-Wodehouse (then Captain Wodehouse who added her last name Thornton to his) on November 10, 1838. If Diana had been born in 1801 she would have been 37 at the time of her marriage. If born in 1817, she would have been 21 in 1838 and at a much more appropriate age for a first marriage and she was able to take her inheritance as she had come of age. The couple would have three daughters and one son Colonel Albert Thornton-Wodehouse (see signature below) who ultimately inherited the remaining Colonel Thornton materials, which consisted of three paintings at the time of his letter and the sporting trophies. The sporting trophies sold at an auction in July 1884 a few months after her death.

Alicia Meynell, Colonel Thornton's most famous mistress left the Colonel in January 1806 and by some accounts eloped with a naval officer shortly thereafter. The Colonel married Eliza Cawston of Mundon, Essex (his first and only legitimate marriage) in July 1806 and had a son, William the next year. He had sold Thornville Royal to Lord Stourton and had to vacate by Jan 1, 1806. One account of Alicia states that she had ruled Thornville for 8 years beginning when she was 18. That account would place her at Thornville beginning in 1798. Based on account of Alicia's fiery temper and firm hand by which she controlled the Colonel, it is doubtful that she would have allowed the Colonel any dalliances that would have produced a child in 1801 during her tenure at Thornville. Her temper became more evident when she accused the Colonel of seducing her by the promise of title and wealth by marriage.

Albert Thornton-Wodehouse
Son of Thornvilla Diana Rockingham Thornton and grandson of Colonel Thomas Thornton.

A Visit to Falconer's Hall

"Soon after my arrival in England I fell into the company of the celebrated sportsman, Colonel Thornton, of Yorkshire. He was at this time laboring under great unpopularity from several causes, of which I was then ignorant. I only had heard of him through the Sporting Magazine, which I remember reading from a boy. But he had lost himself by many shabby tricks, and was, at the time I got acquainted with him, a good deal cut. He was, however, a man possessed of great wit, a first- rate sportsman, of unbounded hospitality and great conviviality, and had kept the first company, from the Prince of Wales downwards. He was hated by Mrs. Tennant, and she was angry with me for keeping company with him. At this time he had just sold his seat, Thornville Royal, which he bought of the Duke of York, to Lord Stourton for, I heard, £300,000.

He was particularly civil to me, and used to send his grooms and horses for me to ride in the park; and he asked me to go down with him into Yorkshire to a country seat of his called Falconer's Hall, about forty miles beyond York and on the Wolds. I set off in his carriage with a third person, an officer who had served with him in the York Militia when he commanded the regiment. We slept at the Fountain at Huntingdon, and I went into the inn-yard there, which I well remembered, having about fifteen years before, when I was a boy, killed a sparrow there with a stone. I inquired after a fox that used to be kept chained in the yard, but poor Reynard was long since dead.

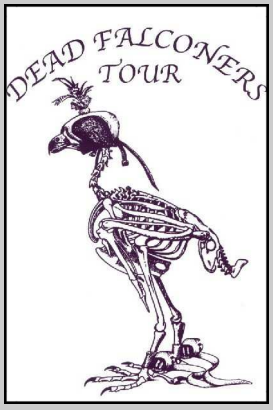
The next night we slept at Doncaster, and the third we got to Falconer's Hall. It was a pretty box, consisting of a hall, a circular dining and drawing room, a bedroom opening into a pretty conservatory, where you could lie and see roses blossoming and the snow outside deep on the Wolds at the same time. It was the middle of March (1806) and bitterly cold, but we had magnificent fires, the finest hare soup I ever tasted, and dinners tolerably good, for the Colonel was never famous for dinners. He ate little himself; all he thought of was giving his friends lots of wine. He was a very extraordinary man; he could sit up drinking night after night and sleep in his chair instead of going to bed, and then get on his horse and hunt all day. At this time he was over sixty, and I, who was only twenty-eight, could hardly stand this.

He had no less than sixty couple of beagles, and one day we took the whole pack out together. As they used to gallop down the hills, their white and yellow backs all close together, they looked like a sheet of water. I rode his best horses, and one day after dinner asked him what he would take for a high-bred mare I had ridden in the morning; she was bred by the celebrated Mr. O'Kelly, of Canon's, the owner of the still more celebrated racehorse Eclipse, and this mare was of his blood and sprung from him."

Excerpt From: "Memoirs of George Elers, (1777-1842)" iBooks.

Dead Falconers Tours 2002 and 2004

In 1999 Peter Devers, a falconer, was driving in southwestern England in the County of Devon. He saw a road sign for Chudleigh and it registered as though he knew the name. He remembered that this was the home of William Brodrick. Could he also be buried there? Peter set out to locate his grave. When Peter got to the cemetery, he saw a Kestrel hovering over a gravestone at the end of the cemetery so he went in that direction and almost immediately found the grave. Grave locating was only one of Peter's fortes, as I would later find out. We wondered what had happened to other falconers and authors of the 19th century. We determined there was more information that we might be able to obtain so we set out to plan a trip to Europe and Great Britain to see what we could discover. It took three years of planning to get all four of us (Peter Devers, Natalie Nicholson, John and Vicki Swift) together at the same time and to locate where most of the individuals we were looking for had lived and were buried. Since our time would be limited, we decided to try to also visit additional places, which would also have some falconry-related interest either in art, museums or exhibitions. In both Europe and England that was not hard to accomplish as falconry had been a significant daily activity for hundreds of years. Peter and Natalie would get to England after Vicki and I had been in Europe for a week but we were to meet at London's Gatwick Airport to start our ten days together. We found when we discussed our trip with other falconers and related that we would be spending most of our time in cemeteries there were some very strange expressions from our friends. It was during one of these discussions that we arrived at a name for our venture. It would be called the DEAD FALCONERS TOUR hoping it sounded more like a rock concert than a graveyard search. The tour proved very enlightening and more information has been learned about each of the individuals researched. It would seem inappropriate to say that these people seemed to come alive but they certainly have become more real to each of us who went. We decided to present the TOUR in a diary form as it helps us recall all of the events and more enjoyable reading. These diaries were published in the 2002 and 2004 NAFA Journals. Colonel Thornton's old estate Allerton Mauleverer was one of the significant falconer's homes that we visited.

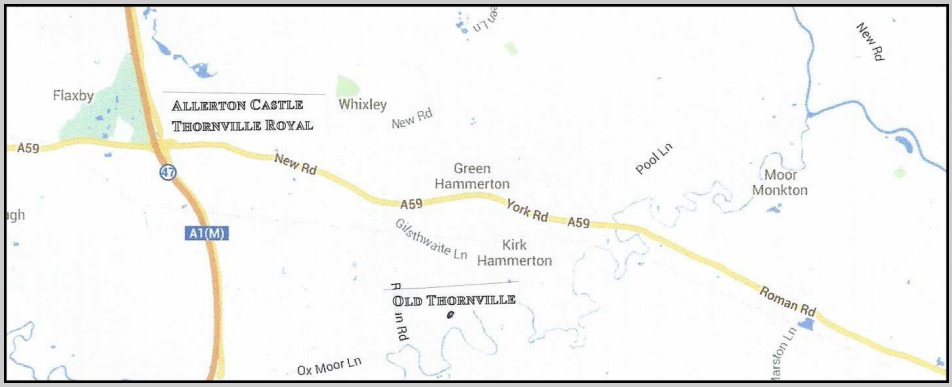


Tour Logo

John and Vicki Swift
Natalie Nicholson and Peter Devers

Old Thornville and Allerton Castle Today

Proximity of Old Thornville to Thornville Royal now Allerton Castle



Old Thornville Today

Old Thornville, the original home of the Thornton's still exists.
Photos of the home have been denied by the current owners.

Alicia Meynell, an Early Sportswomen

History of Women in Sports Timeline

- 776 B.C. - The first Olympics are held in ancient Greece. Women are excluded, so they compete every four years in their own Games of Hera, to honor the Greek goddess who ruled over women and the earth.
- 396 B.C. - Kyniska, a Spartian princess, wins an Olympic chariot race, but is barred from collecting her prize in person.
- 1406 - Dame Juliana Berners of Great Britain writes the first known essay on sports fishing. She described how to make a rod and flies, when to fish, and the many kinds of fishing in her essay, "Treatise of Fishing with an Angle."
- 1552 - Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-87), an avid golfer, coins the term "caddy" by calling her assistants cadets. It is during her reign that the famous golf course at St. Andrews is built.
- 1704 - Sarah Kemble Knight (1666-1727) sets out alone on horseback from Boston to New Haven and later New York, keeping a diary of her travels, which was published in 1825 as *The Journal of Madame Knight*.
- 1722 - British fighter Elizabeth Wilkinson enters the boxing ring.
- 1780 - Three days of horse racing at the track in Hempstead Plains, Long Island, include an event for women riders.
- 1784 - Elizabeth Thible of Lyons, France, is the first woman to soar in a hot air balloon.
- 1798 - France's Jeanne Labrosse makes a solo balloon flight.
- **1804 - <u>The first woman jockey was Alicia Meynell of England. She first competed in a four-mile race in York, England.</u>**
- 1805 - Madeleine Sophie Armant Blanchard solos in the first of 67 gas-powered balloon flights. She made her living as a balloonist, was appointed official Aeronaut of the Empire by Napoleon, and toured Europe until she fell to her death in an aerial fireworks display in 1819.
- 1805 - The first ice skating race for Dutch women is in held in Leeuwarden.
- **<u>1805 - Englishwoman Alicia Meynell, riding as Mrs. Thornton, defeats a leading male jockey, Buckle, in a race.</u>**

York Meeting

The Celebrated Race between Mr. Thornton's Vingarillo & Mr. Flints br. h. Thornville which was run for on Knavesmire Aug.t 25.th 1804 — A Match for 500 gs. & 1000 gs. Bye Four Miles.

London Publish'd by R. Cribb Jun.r N.o 288. High Holborn.

Old Conqueror - A Fox Hound of Celebrity

Fox Hunting was a passion equal to hawking with Colonel Thornton and he possessed renowned kennels with notable fox hounds such as Merkin, Lounger, Lucifer, Madcap and their outstanding sire Conqueror. Toasts to "*Blood of Old Conqueror*" were common during evening festivities. However, as of the date of this publication no image of *Old Conqueror* has been discovered, so all currently available information has been included to help future researchers in their quest for information about this important foxhound.

-*Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*, 1867. Vol. 12, pp. 72:
"Stag-hounds and harriers were the inhabitants of the kennels in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and a fox, accidentally found, was hunted by both the one and the other. That he is the descendent of a cross betwixt the two appears to have been thoroughly established; and it a matter of speculation whether there was not more than one cross. The celebrated Colonel Thornton, of Thornville Royal, used a Spanish pointer and crossed back to pure blood in the second and third generation. This is an undoubted fact, openly avowed. And noticed in the sporting publications of the day. His object appears to have been to augment the power of hunting combined with obedience; for hounds of the day in that dark time were most riotous, in and out of the kennel, and discipline, as at present understood, was unknown. Merkin, *Conqueror*, Lucifer, Lounger, and Madcap by Lucifer, amongst others, are recorded to have been excellent hounds. … *Conqueror* was largely used in the North, especially in the kennels of Sir M. Masterman Sykes, and Mr. Humphrey Osbaldeston, of Hunmanby. The hounds of the latter, with Isaac Grainger as huntsman, were known to be amongst the best of their day. The broad nose and large head to which the late Mr. Warde was so partial, might have been derived, possibly straining back to the Thornville Royal Kennel."

-Gilbey, Sir Walter, *Animal Painters of England from the year 1650*. London: Vinton & Co. , page 213:
"Among great variety of animals there were red-deer, roebuck, fallow-deer and Eastern species; Russian wild boar and French, received from the First Napoleon in exchange for seventy couples having the blood of the famous *Old Conqueror* to prove their breeding…"

-Wheble, J. *The Sporting Magazine.* London; J. Wheble, November 1804. p. 52:
"After much search in the upper and lower covers, the hound Modish, one of *Old Conqueror's* blood at last gave tongue and immediately from a thicket out bounded the fox.

This title is from an engraving, which identifies the origin of *Old Conqueror*.
Modish, A remarkable fine fox hound bred by Col. T. Thornton. Modish was the daughter of Merlin and Rival both which lineally descended from the celebrated Askhams Old Conqueror. Engraved by Robert Pollard after Sawrey Gilpin. Published Feb 11, 1788.

Old Conqueror-A Fox Hound of Celebrity

-Thormanby, *Kings of The Rod, Rifle and Gun*. London: Hutchinson and Co., p. 86-87. “You ask me what I know of old Thornton. I first became acquainted with him in Paris in October 1822, when I became a member of a club (of which he was the head) who dined together at the *Shakespeare*- a tavern kept by an old private servant of Colonel T.’s, one Tillbrook-every Wednesday, which we had a plain English dinner, roast beef, vegetables, and plum pudding, to say nothing of a good sea coal fire in an iron grate. Two of the most constant attendants were the gallant Sir Sidney Smith and the great (in every sense of the word) traveler Belzoni. Colonel Thornton though no longer a master of fox hounds always dined in a scarlet, straight-cut coat, of the whipper-in style, and his first toast was invariably ‘Success to Fox-Hunting.' Then came Merkin, a celebrated foxhound of his, and the blood of *Old Conqueror*; and then in honor of the pastime of which he was passionately so fond, ‘Lord Orford and Falconry'."

-Egan, Pierce, *Pierce Egan’s Book of Sports and Mirror of Life*. London: T. T. Tegg and J. Tegg, 1832, p. 133: “Dogs. Fox Hounds. -Merkin a well-known fox hound, bred by Colonel Thornton. -Lucifer. A most remarkable fox hound, the sire of Lounger and Mad Cap, of equal celebrity. – *Old Conqueror*. A Matchless foxhound, sire of many well-known dogs in the annals of foxhunting."

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

The Thorntons were a family name known since Norman times but our history of the family of the sporting Thornton begins with his grandfather Sir William Thornton.

1707 The grandfather of the sporting colonel, Sir William Thornton was chosen to present a speech at the Articles of the Union between England and Scotland in the reign of Queen Anne and was knighted.

1712 William Thornton born to Sir William Thornton of York.

1722 Houghton Hall in Norfolk begins construction under the first Earl of Orford, Britain's first Prime Minister (Robert Walpole) and home of the future Walpoles and Earls of Orford.

1745 Colonel William Thornton of Cattal Hall and later Thornville recruits 100 men at his own expense to fight against the Scots in 1745 at the Battle of Falkirk and Culloden where he distinguishes himself.

1st Earl of Orford dies, passes the estates to 2nd Earl of Orford (Robert Walpole).

1749 Colonel William Thornton married Mary Myster the daughter of John Myster, Esq. of Epsom, Surrey on July 11, 1749 and a daughter Mary was born later that year.

1751 Colonel William Thornton becomes a Minister of Parliament with the support of the Marquis of Rockingham.

Their second child and only son Thomas is born.

2nd Earl of Orford dies and estates passes to 3rd Earl of Orford (George Walpole) who later becomes fast friends with Colonel Thornton and was himself a falconer and widely recognized for coursing with greyhounds.

1755 Thomas was sent to the Charterhouse School in London when he performed well in his studies but his time there was cut short by illness. He attempted to return but was academically behind his classmates.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1766 Thomas Thornton enters Glasgow University where his father once taught.

1769 Colonel William Thornton dies on July 10th, 1769 leaving his estate to his son then a minor. His mother Mary manages the estates until Thomas comes of age (21).

Thomas Thornton had already been commissioned into the West York Regiment by his father and was appointed Colonel by the Marquis of Rockingham.

1770 Mary, the eldest daughter of William Thornton marries Samuel Francis Barlow. They would have 11 children including Andrew whom Colonel Thornton mentioned in his will.

1772 Colonel Thornton founds the Confederate Hawks of Great Britain.

Professional falconer Jan Daams came over from Valkenswaard to manage the falcons later to be joined by Frank van der Heuvell, Jan Pells, the Bot brothers and Adrian Mollen.

From 1772 to 1789 Colonel Thomas Thornton was master at Old Thornville near Cattal in Yorkshire.

1776 American Revolution begins 1776 -1783.

The 3rd Earl of Orford founds the first public greyhound coursing club at Swaffam, Norfolk near his estate of Houghton Hall.

1778 Thornton won a four mile race on horseback at Knavesmire, became a member of the notorious Savoir Vivre Club, jumped his own height, and performed other similar athletic feats.

1779 George Walpole the 3rd Earl of Orford sells a significant portion of his father's magnificent art collection to Catherine the Great of Russia in order to save the family estate from bankruptcy. It is still regarded as a national tragedy in the UK.

1780 Sawrey Gilpin paints a hawking scene in which the Colonel picks up his hawk from a heron and while doing so his horse jumps a fence on its own to be near the Colonel.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1781 He receives the silver gilt urn from the Falconers' Club for nine years management (1772-1781).

1782 He begins his tours of Scotland (1782-1789) with 1784 being the primary year.

Colonel Thornton receives a silver gilt epergne for a bet that a fox would run over 20 miles.

1786 On returning from a sporting tour of Scotland he is introduced to the Duke of York, who with his brother The Prince of Wales is renovating the estate of Allerton Mauleverer in Yorkshire. They were anticipating the death of their father King George III who suffered from a recurring mental illness. King George would lose the American colonies but lived until 1820.

1787 Colonel Thornton has a walking match with a Mr. May to walk 50 miles in 14 hours or less. Colonel Thornton completed the walk of 51 miles in 12.5 hours.

1789 Bought a house on Loch Alvie in Speyside, Scotland.

Upon the recovery of King George III, the Duke of York sold Allerton Mauleverer to Colonel Thomas Thornton for £110,000 who renamed it Thornville Royal and left Old Thornville.

French Revolution begins much to the despair of Colonel Thornton, a Francophile.

1790 Colonel Thornton sells Merkin for four hogsheads of claret, and the seller to have two couples of the whelps.

1791 He buys Baythorpe Hall twelve miles from Scarborough and rebuilt it a cost of £10,000 renaming it Falconer's Hall as the country was eminently suited for coursing and falconry.

The noted rural architect John Plaw is engaged to build kennels for the fox hounds, a farmhouse, a dairy house and hunting gates with the initial "T" to mark Thornton's property.

On December 5th The 3rd Earl of Orford dies and Houghton Hall passes to Horace Walpole the 4th Earl of Orford. His famous coursing greyhounds are sold with Colonel Thornton acquiring the best.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1792 Sawrey Gilpin paints Colonel Thornton's famous stallion Jupiter.

1793 Sawrey Gilpin paints his life size painting *Death of the Fox* commemorating the fox hunt lasting 28 miles. It measures 12 feet 2 inches by 8 feet 6 inches and was widely recognized as his best work.

King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed.

1795 He was court-martialed, found guilty, and publicly reprimanded in front of his troops.

1795 He resigned his commission "in disgust."

He receives his "Triumph of Truth" medallion and other gifts from his soldiers and neighbors.

1796 He invited two French Commissioners to visit him in the middle of the war with France and took them to London. It drew a protest from the Duke of Richmond on behalf of the Government.

Philip Reinagle together with Sawrey Gilpin painted the portrait of *Colonel Thornton in the Forest of Glencoe* with the only 12 barreled rifle ever made.

1797 Meets Alicia Massingham, the daughter of a Norwich watchmaker.

1798 Alicia comes to live with Colonel Thornton to begin an eight year reign as mistress of Thornville Royal.

1800 Colonel Thornton's mother Mary dies at age 84 on October 26th, 1800 and he erects a memorial to her in St. Martin's Church adjacent to Thornville Royal.

He make a public speech at York, against the Government.

First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte and his troops cross the Alps into Italy and triumphed over the Austrians in June at the significant Battle of Marengo.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1801 Colonel Thornton was sued by McLean, of Edinburgh for goods received and judgment was given against him. He wrote an indignant refutation of the judgment to the papers.

1802 He made a tour of France during the Peace of Amiens with Alicia. He attempted to gain the favor of Napoleon by presenting him with a set of pistols in the hopes of regaining his reputation.

1803 The program for a week's sport at Falconer's Hall was made public: On Monday, stag-hunting, followed by coursing; Tuesday, wolf, stag and fox-hunting and beagling; Wednesday, stag-hunting and coursing; Thursday, wolf, stag and fox-hunting, beagling and coursing to meet every day at Falconer's Hall where there will be a sportsman's breakfast provided for all the company. Likely this was organized to celebrate the Colonel's return from France, where he had gone on a sporting tour equipped on his customary lavish scale.

Exhibited a painting by Philip Reinagle of *The Great Tench* caught at Thornville Royal.

1804 His *Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and the Highlands of Scotland* was published.

He laid a wager of £1,000 on "Mrs. Thornton", actually Alicia Massingham, also notable equestrian in a four mile horse race against a Captain Flint. Her horse Vingarillo went lame and she lost. It was the first time in the annals of the Turf that a woman had ever been matched to ride a race against a man in public, and there was a general belief that 'the sporting Mrs. Thornton' would ride, man-fashion, in buckskin breeches with jockey's cap and jacket. She rode in the traditional style for women.

Captain Flint tried to collect the winnings but Colonel Thornton refused to pay with the excuse that the wager wasn't a real bet at all but was only put up to arouse public interest.

Napoleon became Emperor of France until 1815 when he was defeated at Waterloo.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1805 Alicia's crowning feat of horsemanship was at the York August meeting of 1805, when she was engaged in two matches. In the first, for which the stakes were 2,000 guineas and four hogsheads of claret, her opponent did not appear, and she had a walk over. In the second, for a cup valued at 700 guineas, she rode the Colonel's brown mare Louisa, against Mr. Blomfield's chestnut mare Allegra, ridden by the veteran Frank Buckle, the finest jockey of his day. She won the race becoming the first women to ever best a man in a sporting contest.

Colonel Thornton had not paid his wager of 1804 and Captain Flint tried to collect the wager during Alicia's race while sitting in the grandstands. He horsewhipped the much older and popular Colonel Thornton resulting in the loss of any potential public support. Captain Flint began to suffer from asthma, which he sought to relieve with doses of prussic acid until one day in 1832 he took an overdose.

One of his visitors was Mr. Robert Christie Burton, who had just come of age and thought Thornton to be rich and a promising object for plunder. However, Colonel Thornton took him on a drunken tour of the wine cellars and inveigled him into buying pictures, books, guns etc. to the amount of at least £20,000 as well as a large quantity of vintage wine. Burton later tried to get out of the deal and the affair ended up in court.

In a deposition before the court Richard Christie Burton states "That he became of age on the 11th of November 1805, (born 1784) and was introduced to Colonel Thornton in the winter of 1804. He went to a sale of horses on the 6th or 7th of October 1805. That sale was postponed until December 7th, 1805. He returned at the end of November 1805 to purchase pictures. Burton purchased more than he could pay for and issued warrant of attorney that would ultimately end up in court. Burton incurred many debts and ended up in debtors prison ultimately dying in Paris in 1822."

Colonel Thornton published a pamphlet entitled "Calumny Combated" explaining and exonerating his conduct in a quarrel with Burton, who had received support and encouragement from Alicia.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1805 May. Colonel Thornton puts his two celebrated greyhounds Major and Czarina up for sale at Tattersalls. He had purchased them from Lord Orford upon his death.

Towards the close of 1805 the Colonel found himself in "Queer Street" as a natural consequence of his lavish lifestyle. He parted with Thornville Royal to Lord Stourton for £226,000 (for the mansion, pleasure grounds, and park he gave £163,800, and for twenty-eight other lots, £62,650: or in all £226,450). Lord Stourton was to take possession in January 1806. Thornton's collection of pictures, valued at £30,000, his choice wines, his horses, his hounds, his deer, his guns, were all sold. But he kept his hawks, the finest in the world. The fair Alicia already been taken off his hands by a dashing young naval officer who had come into a fortune.

Thornton still had his place at Baythorpe which he bought from Mr. Bilby in 1791. He had built there at a cost of £10,000, a handsome house, which he christened Falconer's Hall, with fine stabling, and accommodation for his famous hawks. Situated among the wolds of East Riding about twelve miles from Scarborough, Baythorpe afforded excellent scope for coursing and hawking. And there the Colonel held high revel with his friends, varying the sport and festivities by annual sporting excursions to Scotland and occasional visits to London.

Christmas. The Colonel was due to surrender possession of Thornville Royal to Lord Stourton on January 6th. As was the custom for the past 16 years he opened the doors to everyone and filled the tables with friends and passed the days in various field sports. He held court in the evenings in convivial harmonious hilarity and provided the finest wines in all of England. On New Years Day coursing was held in the park and a grand dinner was held with no wines under thirty years old with many over 60. The house and Temple of Victory were illuminated in remembrance of the Soldiers of the York Militia. The upper lake was drained revealing many fish such as pike, carp, tench and perch which were taken with one half saved for Lord Stourton. The Colonel was then escorted to Falconer's Hall with all the thanks and gratitude of his friends for his many years of hospitality.

1806 March 13th. The Colonel in court again where an attorney asks him if he had disposed of his house, "The Boudoir." He had not, but placed its value as 14 hogsheads of claret. The attorney asked him how many times he had been arrested and he indicated 20. Thornton complained of entrusting professional men to take care of his affairs, which they had not done, so he had been arrested numerous times designed to create expense.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1806 March 31st. He publishes his *Sporting Tour of France* in 1802 with the sole rights given to an indigent school fellow, The Rev. Martyn.

July. The Colonel at last took to himself a lawful wife in the person of Miss Eliza Cawston, the daughter of a gentleman farmer of Munden, in Essex.

1807 A son, William Thomas, was born in London.

1808 The East Riding became unsuitable for hawking due to the increasing pace of the enclosures. He sold Falconer's Hall and moved to Spye Park in Wiltshire in a procession of wagons, carts, livestock and people several miles long. He also sold "The Boudoir" for fourteen hogsheads of claret and took a villa in the Edgeware Road. During this period he seems to have been in financial difficulties but he still continued to enjoy field sports with his hawks, his hounds, and his guns in Wiltshire. He maintained open house in spite of rascally servants and legal adversaries.

1814 He was over in France again, astonishing the natives with his hounds and hunting establishment.

He gave up keeping hawks.

1815 He was involved in a scene in a London hotel, Pagliano's when a huntsman came to claim back wages and was ejected. The case against him was dismissed.

Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815.

Colonel Thornton returned to France after Waterloo and bought a derelict chateau at Pont-sur-Seine, south-east of Paris, and rented the Chateau de Chambord. He styled himself as the "Marquess du Pont" and "Prince de Chambord."

1817 His illegitimate daughter, Thornvilla Diana Rockingham Thornton, was born. The mother was Priscilla Duins of low birth.

He obtained a French Royal Ordinance permitting him to establish his legal domicile in France and securing him the enjoyment of all civil rights so long as he should continue to reside there.

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1818 Thornton's will is made on October 2nd, 1818 in England.

1820 He sells the majority of his paintings at auction in London.

1821 He sells his estate in France and moved into lodgings in Paris run by an old servant where he founded a Falconers' Club, primarily devoted to dining, wining and singing hunting songs. The press erroneously reported his death on Christmas Day. It was suggested that he had spread the report himself.

For some months his health was visibly on the decline, yet he would lie in bed all day, rise at five to go to the club, sing the best songs and tell the best stories of any of the members.

1823 Colonel Thornton lives for nearly two years after the newspapers had killed him and dies at his rooms in Paris. A couple of hours before the fatal seizure, he had ordered out his hounds, and the horse on which he was mounted was standing at the door when he breathed his last.

Thornton's will directs that his mistress Priscilla Duins be allowed to select which ever of his houses, either in England or France, she thinks fit, as her residence, and shall have and enjoy all the household furniture, plate, china, linen and other household effects, which shall be in and about such house for and during the term of her natural life, together with an annuity of £500. It provides for the maintenance and education of Thornvilla Diana Rockingham Thornton, his illegitimate daughter by Priscilla Duins, until she attains the age of twenty-one, which it strictly entails, first on her issue and in failure thereof then successively, on different branches of his own family. He leaves only £100 to the "son of Mrs. Thornton" and nothing to his legitimate widow.

1823 His will is contested by his legitimate widow.

Colonel Thornton was to receive all the benefits of a natural born citizen of France.

French law does not allow "by will" to deprive his lawful widow and offspring nor bequeath to his adulterous offspring and its mother "an hereditary portion". Thus the laws of France make his will null and void "to leave it to Diana."

Chronological Life of Colonel Thomas Thornton

1823 The English court upholds Colonel Thornton's will and rules the petition of Eliza Thornton and her son William Thomas Thornton be rejected. Diana is declared the legitimate heir of Colonel Thornton. Reported in *A Report of the case of Curling v. Thornton.*

1884 Diana Thornton-Wodehouse dies in March and on the 11th of June 1884 her estate passes to her son Albert. Many of Colonel Thornton's sporting trophies were sold at auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Wood. The Silver Gilt Urn was purchased for £112 by the 4th Earl of Orford (restored) and placed at the family estate at Wolterton.

1885 In a letter from grandson Albert Thornton-Wodehouse "My mother died last year [March 1884] in Mentome, France. I am extremely sorry that I can be of no help to M. Pichot-but my mother being only six years old at the time Col Thornton died." This firmly establishes Diana's birth year as 1817.

1914 Colonel Albert Thornton Wodehouse dies without children and the name of "Thornton" as it related to Colonel Thornton passes into history.

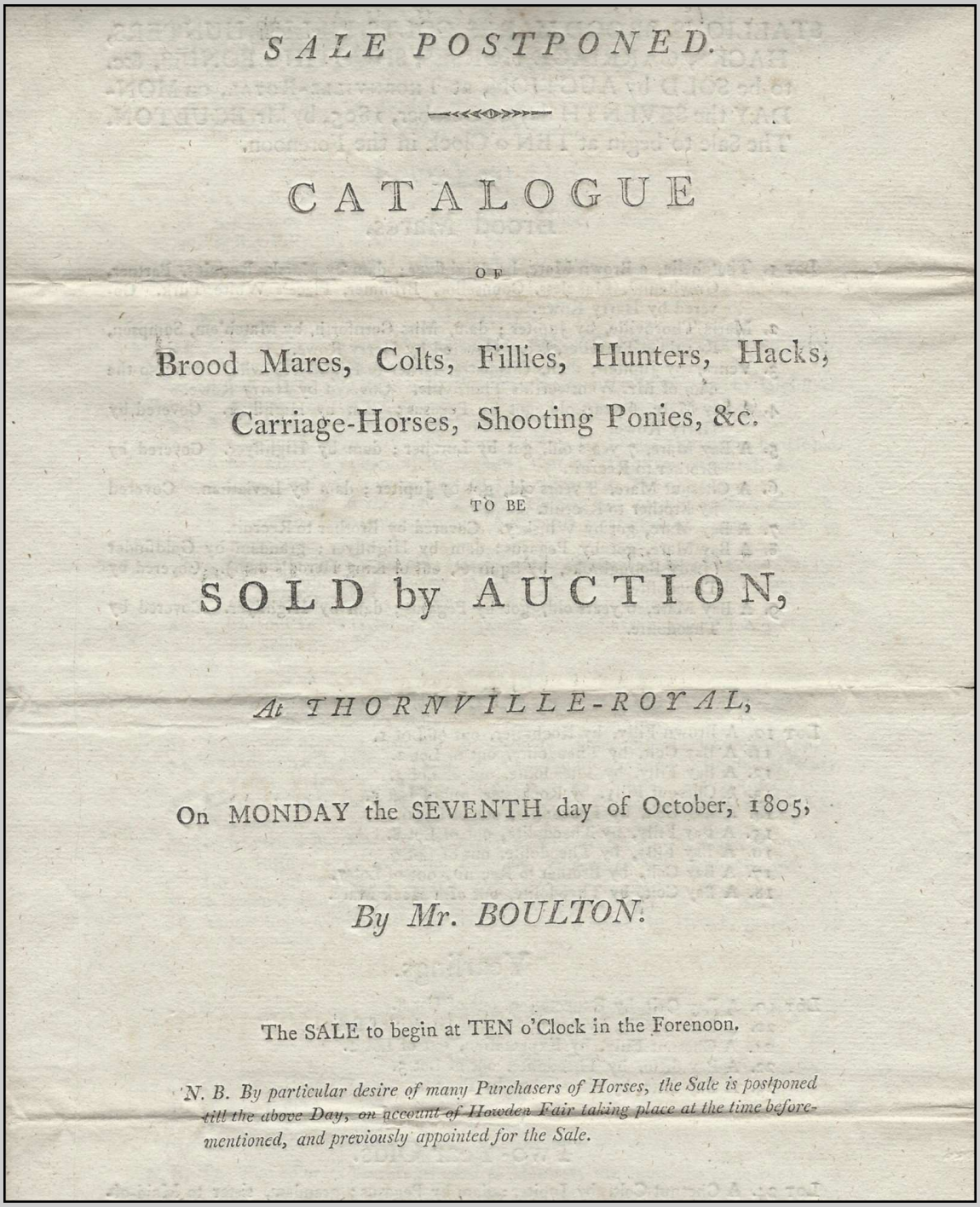
At the present time no further records of Colonel Thornton's legitimate son William have been located and no further records of "Alicia" can be found. Hopefully future genealogical research will reveal what happened to these two significant people in the life of Colonel Thornton.

Colonel Thornton's Sale of His Sporting Trophies

At the death of Colonel Thornton in 1823, his possessions passed to his daughter Diana. Diana later married a Captain Edward Thornton-Wodehouse who took her family name in tribute to her. They had 3 daughters and 1 son who inherited the Thornton family possessions at her death on March 13th, 1884. Her son Major Albert Thornton-Wodehouse put the sporting trophies up for sale at Christie's on June 11, 1884. This summary of the results appeared in the 1884 edition of *The Zoologist* edited by James Edmund Harting. The Silver Gilt Urn was purchased by the 4th Earl of Orford who returned it to Orford Estate at Wolterton until it was purchased in 2003 and now resides in the USA at the Archives of Falconry in Boise, ID. The fox hunting silver Epergne is currently for sale in New York City, USA by S. J. Shrubsole.

Mementoes of Hawking and Hunting in the Last Century.—On the 11th June last, Messrs. Christie, Manson, and Woods sold, at their auction rooms, King Street, St. James's, several pieces of silver plate presented to Col. Thornton, of Falconer's Hall and Thornville Royal, Yorkshire, a noted sportsman, who flourished at the end of the last and beginning of the present century. This plate, the property of Major Thornton Wodehouse, R.A., was sold by auction, at so much per ounce, as follows:—A silver-gilt tea urn, formed as a globe, surmounted by a group of a hawk and dead hare, with this inscription—"Col. Thornton, proposer and manager of the Confederate Hawks, is requested to receive this piece of plate from George, Earl of Orford, together with the united thanks of the members of the Falconer's Club, as a testimony of their esteem and just sense of his assiduity, and of the unparalleled excellence to which in the course of nine years' management he has brought them. When unable to attend them any longer, he made them a present to the Earl of Orford.—Barton Mills, June 23, 1781." Then follow the names of the members of the Falconers' Club; 136 oz. at 15s., £112. A silver-gilt épergne, with oval open-work basket on chased stand, with four fluted dishes, inscribed, "Col. Thornton received this piece of plate of Sir Harry Featherstone and Sir John Ramsden, Baronets, as a compromise to a bet made in honour of a Hambleton fox. Col. Thornton, by his original bet, engaged for 300 gs. P.P. (play or pay) to find a fox at Hunts Whint, or in the Easingwold country, that after Christmas, 1779, should run twenty miles. The day to be fixed and the morning approved by Col. Thornton, and to be determined by Sir J. Ramsden and Sir H. Featherstone or the company up." On the bottom was this certificate:—"We, the undermentioned, do declare that on a day appointed for the decision of the bet made by Col. Thornton with Sir J. Ramsden and Sir H. Featherstone, that a fox broke off in view of the hounds and company, which fox was killed after a continued burst, there not being one check, by the different watches, for two hours and thirty-eight minutes, and we, being the only gentlemen up, do believe that the said fox ran at least twenty-eight miles. Col. T., being a party concerned, gave no vote.—Lascelles Lascelles, Henry Hutchinson, Val. Kitchinman, W. Dawson, Randolph Marriott. N.B.—There were only eight horsemen out of seventy up." 108 oz. at 29s. per ounce, £156 12s. A two-handled cup and cover, won by Mrs. Thornton, inscribed, "Col. Thornton's Louisa, by Pegasus and Nell (dam of Kill Devil), rode by Mrs. A. Thornton, 9st, beat Mr. Bloomfield's Sister to Allegrante, rode by the noted F. Buckle, 12 st., two miles over York [Race-course], for 1000 gs. This gold [silver-gilt] cup and two hogsheads of Côte Rotie, August, 1804, 96 oz. at 17s. 6d., £81." In addition to these trophies were a two-handled cup and cover, presented to Col. Thornton by the York Regiment, 1795, which fetched £96; and two Louis XVI. soup tureens, part of the same presentation, £900., the prices realised being regarded as very good.

Horse Auction October 1805



SALE POSTPONED.

CATALOGUE

OF

Brood Mares, Colts, Fillies, Hunters, Hacks,

Carriage-Horses, Shooting Ponies, &c.

TO BE

SOLD by AUCTION,

At THORNVILLE-ROYAL,

On MONDAY the SEVENTH day of October, 1805,

By Mr. BOULTON.

The SALE to begin at TEN o'Clock in the Forenoon.

N. B. By particular desire of many Purchasers of Horses, the Sale is postponed till the above Day, on account of Howden Fair taking place at the time before-mentioned, and previously appointed for the Sale.

This sale was the dispersal sale of the Colonel Thornton's stable. Just two months after Alicia's famous riding victory over the leading jockey of the day Frank Buckle. A young Robert Christie Burton would purchase horses from this sale and later claim they were in poor health. He began a legal battle with the Colonel. The Colonel eventually prevailed but the battle was only beginning with the "harpies" of the law. He would vacate Thornville Royal on January 6th, 1806 and move everything to Falconer's Hall.

Horse Auction October 1805

CATALOGUE of

STALLIONS, BROOD MARES, COLTS, FILLIES, HUNTERS, HACKS, CARRIAGE HORSES, SHOOTING PONIES, &c. to be SOLD by AUCTION, at THORNVILLE-ROYAL, on MONDAY the SEVENTH day of October, 1805, by Mr. BOULTON. The Sale to begin at TEN o'Clock in the Forenoon.

Brood Mares.

LOT 1. Thatchella, a Brown Mare, by Highflyer; dam by Marsk, Regulus, Partner, Greyhound, Makeless, Counsellor, Brimmer, Place's White Turk. Covered by Harry Rowe.
2. Maria Thornville, by Jupiter; dam, Miss Cornforth, by Match'em, Sampson, Regulus, Traveller, &c. Covered by Harry Rowe.
3. Venus, by Jupiter; dam, Cleopatra, (sister to Highflyer) which was also the dam of Mr. Wentworth's Thornville. Covered by Harry Rowe.
4. A Bay Mare, 6 years old, got by Pegasus; dam by Highflyer. Covered by Harry Rowe.
5. A Bay Mare, 7 years old, got by Lurcher; dam by Highflyer. Covered by Brother to Recruit.
6. A Chesnut Mare, 8 years old, got by Jupiter; dam by Leviathan. Covered by Brother to Recruit.
7. A Bay Mare, got by Whiskey. Covered by Brother to Recruit.
8. A Bay Mare, got by Pegasus; dam by Highflyer; grandam by Goldfinder (Lady Bolingbroke, by Squirrel, out of King Herod's dam). Covered by Theodolite.
9. A Bay Mare, 6 years old, got by Pegasus; dam by Highflyer. Covered by Theodolite.

Foals.

LOT 10. A Brown Filly, by Rochester, out of Lot 1.
11. A Bay Colt, by Theodolite, out of Lot 2.
12. A Bay Filly, by Theodolite, out of Lot 3.
13. A Chesnut Filly, by Rochester, out of Lot 5.
14. A Bay Colt, by Theodolite, out of Lot 6.
15. A Bay Filly, by Theodolite, out of Lot 8.
16. A Bay Filly, by Theodolite, out of Lot 9.
17. A Bay Colt, by Brother to Recruit, out of Lot 7.
18. A Bay Colt, by Theodolite, out of a Hack Mare.

Yearlings.

LOT 19. A Bay Colt, by Expectation, out of Lot 8.
20. A Brown Filly, by brother to Recruit, out of Lot 1.
21. A Chesnut Filly, by Expectation, out of Lot 2.
22. A Bay ditto, by Theodolite, out of Lot 5.
23. A Bay ditto, by ditto; dam by Pegasus.

Two-Year Olds.

LOT 24. A Chesnut Colt, by Jupiter; dam by Pegasus; grandam, sister to Maid-of-All-Work, by Highflyer, Syphon, Regulus, Snip, &c.
25. A Chesnut Colt, by Stamford, out of Lot 2.
26. A Bay ditto, by Jupiter, out of Lot 8.
27. A Chesnut Filly, by Jupiter, out of Lot 9.
28. A Chesnut ditto, by ditto, out of Mabelle, by Volunteer; grandam, Gossamer, by Herod; great grandam, Ruth, own sister to the dam of Highflyer.
29. A Chesnut Filly, by Jupiter; dam, Heifer, by Woodpecker; grandam, Thatchella's dam.

Colonel Thornton's Horse Auction Broadsheet October 1805
Note the pedigree of those horses for sale as they are from the finest Thoroughbreds of the time including their foundation sires.

Horse Auction October 1805

Three-Year Olds.

Lot 30. A Bay Filly, by Jupiter, out of Lot 1.
31. A Bay ditto, by Patriot, out of Lot 2.
32. A Bay ditto, by Jupiter, out of Lot 9.
33. A Chesnut ditto, by ditto, out of the dam of Lot 29.
34. A Chesnut ditto, by ditto; dam by Traveller.
35. A Chesnut ditto, by ditto; dam by ditto.
36. A Chesnut Colt, by Jupiter; dam by True Blue.

Four-Year Olds.

Lot 37. A Chesnut Colt, by Tamerlane, out of the dam of Lot 29.
38. A Chesnut Filly, by Jupiter; dam by Farmer's Glory.
39. A Bay Filly, by Restless, out of Lot 3.
40. A Chesnut Filly, by Jupiter; dam by Dragon.

Hunters.

Lot 41. A Bay Mare, 6 years old, by Pegasus; dam by Trumpator; grandam, Peggy, by Herod; great grandam by Snap.
42. A Bay Mare, 6 years old, by Pegasus; dam, sister to Escape, by Highflyer, Squirrel, Babram, &c.
43. A Bay Mare, 7 years old, by Jupiter.
44. A Chesnut Mare, by Pipator; dam, Frisky, by Fidget; grandam by Herod.
45. A Bay Mare, 6 years old, by Pegasus; dam by Highflyer, Squirrel, &c.
46. A Chesnut Mare, 6 years old, sister to Allegranti.
47. A Brown Mare, 6 years old, got by Pegasus, out of Kill Devil's dam, by Postmaster; grandam Rosebud, by Snap; great grandam, Miss Belsea, by Regulus.
48. A Brown Mare, 7 years old, (own sister to Hermione) by Sir Peter Teazle; dam, (Paulina,) by Florizel; grandam, (Captive,) by Match'em; great grandam, (Calliope,) by Slouch, out of the dam of Atalanta.
49. A Chesnut Cropt Gelding, 7 years old, by Quetlavaca, out of Lot 3. A remarkable good Hunter.
50. A Bay Mare, 7 years old, by Spear, dam by Herod.
51. A Chesnut Mare, 7 years old, by Volunteer; dam by Whipcord, (brother to Woodpecker) by Herod; grandam, (Miss Ramsden,) by Old Cade. A very superior Lady's Mare.
52. A Chesnut Mare, 5 years old, by Ormond; dam, Merkin, by Bourdeaux.
53. Gaberlouni, a Bay Horse, 7 years old, by Anvil; dam, (sister to Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Volunteer, Queen Mab, &c. &c.) by Eclipse; grandam by Tartar.
54. Esterhazy, a Chesnut Horse, 8 years old, by Father O'Leary; dam by Sir Thomas.
55. Le Maitre, a Bay Horse, by Jupiter; dam by Mercury; grandam, (Bonduca,) by Justice; great grandam, Bonduca, by Bandy, Crab, Childers, &c. &c.
56. Le Emperor, a Chesnut Horse, by Coxcomb.
57. A Chesnut Horse, by Coriander; dam by Highflyer.
58. Vingarillo, a Chesnut Horse, by Woodpecker; dam by Herod; grandam by Match'em.

Stallion.

Lot 59. Theodolite, 8 years old, by Sir Peter; dam by Bosphorus.

Shooting Ponies.

Lot 60. A Brown Poney. Remarkably steady.
61. A Brown ditto. A good Hack.
62. A Chesnut ditto. Very steady and safe.
63. A Bay ditto. Remarkably fast, and safe in all her paces.

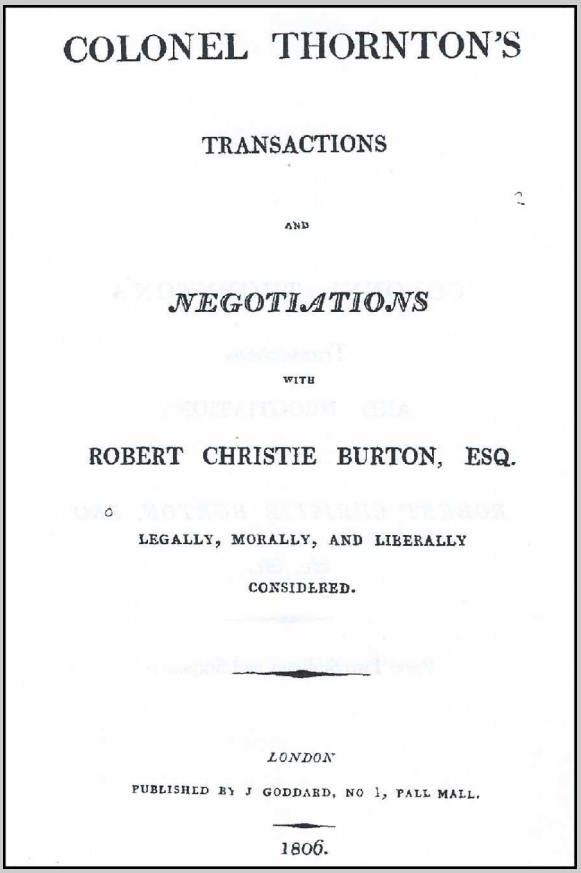
N. B. The above Ponies are accustomed to Harness; the most thorough-bred, and all carry Ladies.

Carriage Horses.

Lot 64. Five Pied-ball'd Horses, all of which go in single or double harness, and so remarkably steady and quiet, that a Lady may drive them.
65. Two Bay Geldings. Match well, and steady in Harness.

Colonel Thornton's Horse Auction Broadsheet October 1805
Vingarillo, the horse Alicia rode unsuccessfully against Capt. Flint is Lot 58.

Robert Christie Burton



COLONEL THORNTON'S

TRANSACTIONS

AND

NEGOTIATIONS

WITH

ROBERT CHRISTIE BURTON, ESQ.

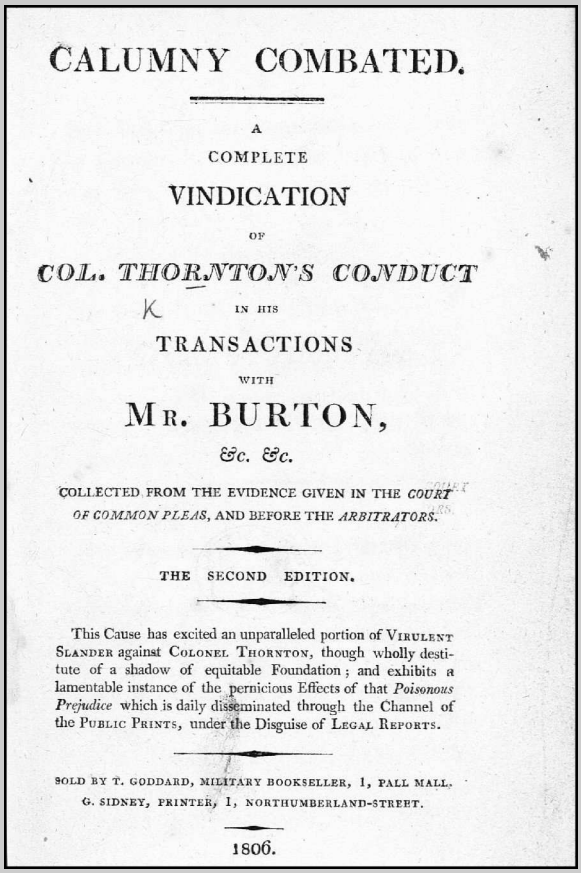
LEGALLY, MORALLY, AND LIBERALLY

CONSIDERED.

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY J GODDARD, NO 1, PALL MALL.

1806.



CALUMNY COMBATED.

A

COMPLETE

VINDICATION

OF

COL. THORNTON'S CONDUCT

IN HIS

TRANSACTIONS

WITH

MR. BURTON,

&c. &c.

COLLECTED FROM THE EVIDENCE GIVEN IN THE *COURT OF COMMON PLEAS*, AND BEFORE THE *ARBITRATORS*.

THE SECOND EDITION.

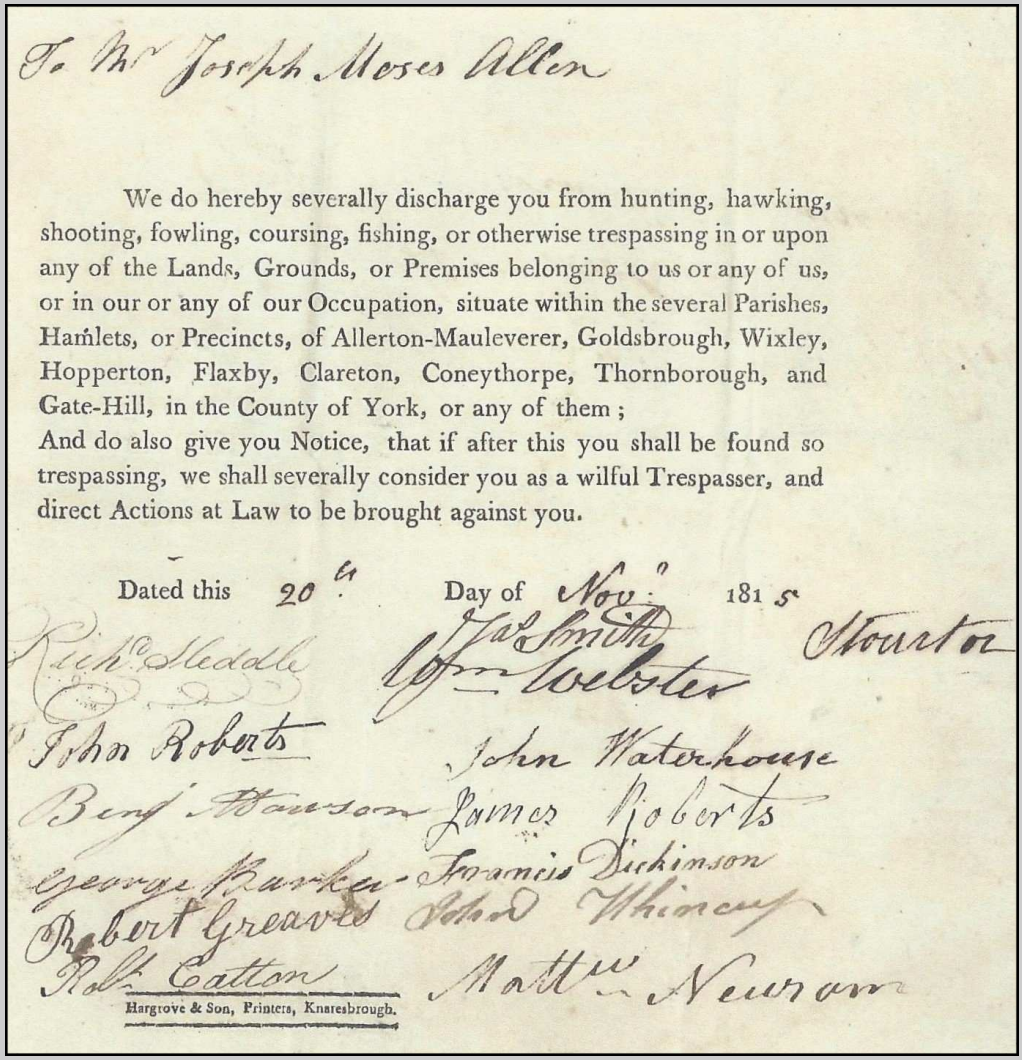
This Cause has excited an unparalleled portion of VIRULENT SLANDER against COLONEL THORNTON, though wholly destitute of a shadow of equitable Foundation; and exhibits a lamentable instance of the pernicious Effects of that *Poisonous Prejudice* which is daily disseminated through the Channel of the PUBLIC PRINTS, under the Disguise of LEGAL REPORTS.

SOLD BY T. GODDARD, MILITARY BOOKSELLER, 1, PALL MALL.
G. SIDNEY, PRINTER, 1, NORTHUMBERLAND-STREET.

1806.

Robert Christie Burton was introduced to Colonel Thornton by Mr. Parkhurst in 1804 and returned to visit Colonel Thornton in October 1805 for an upcoming horse auction. He bought three horses and the Colonel threw in three couple of beagles for an agreed sum of 500 Guineas ($50,000 USD today). As Burton had not yet attained his majority (21 years old) he leaves a promissory note with the Colonel. He returns again in November when he is of legal age to make additional purchases of some sporting paintings along with sporting guns and some additional mares. Apparently he and The Colonel came to an agreement to an amount and a loan arrangement was reached. However it wasn't long before Burton had buyer's remorse and made claims of fraud for sick horses and forged paintings. Colonel Thornton took him to court to try to collect the agreed upon sum. Court hearings were held with both sides providing supporting witness for each position. In the end, the Colonel voluntary agreed to take back much of what he had sold and allowed Burton four years to pay the balance. The local press even weighed in with exaggerated reports stating the Colonel had swindled Burton out of £27,000. These newspaper reports seem to be generated by Mr. Flint and Alicia Massingham who took the opportunity to publicly disparage Colonel Thornton with claims of fraud in the Colonel's promise to marry her. Everyone took their parting shots at a man who had been the gracious and amicable host of Thornville Royal.

The End of Field Sports at Thornville Royal



To Mr Joseph Moses Allen

We do hereby severally discharge you from hunting, hawking, shooting, fowling, coursing, fishing, or otherwise trespassing in or upon any of the Lands, Grounds, or Premises belonging to us or any of us, or in our or any of our Occupation, situate within the several Parishes, Hamlets, or Precincts, of Allerton-Mauleverer, Goldsbrough, Wixley, Hopperton, Flaxby, Clareton, Coneythorpe, Thornborough, and Gate-Hill, in the County of York, or any of them;
And do also give you Notice, that if after this you shall be found so trespassing, we shall severally consider you as a wilful Trespasser, and direct Actions at Law to be brought against you.

Dated this 20th Day of Nov.r 1815

Jas Smith Stourton
Wm Webster
Rich.d Sleddall
John Roberts
John Waterhouse
Benj.n Hanson
James Roberts
George Barker
Francis Dickinson
Robert Greaves
Robt Thincey
Robt Catton
Matthw Newsam

Hargrove & Son, Printers, Knaresbrough.

Notes

This section is for comments and/or corrections to the original text. Controversy with Colonel Thornton would not end with his death and more information is forthcoming with Internet, digital access to genealogical records.

Paul Beecroft-
"Susan Walpole, daughter of Robert (1st Earl) and sister of Robert (2nd Earl) married Anthony Hamond. Following the death of George Walpole (3rd Earl) another Anthony Hamond took over the running of the Swaffam Coursing Club. This Hamond was most likely a falconer and he certainly bred dogs for coursing. His son was Richard Hamond. This Hamond was the one that went to live in Valkenswaard and died there. Both Anthony and Richard knew John Dawson Downes and John/Jan Daams, Peter Danakers/Danckers, Lord Cork, Sebright etc."

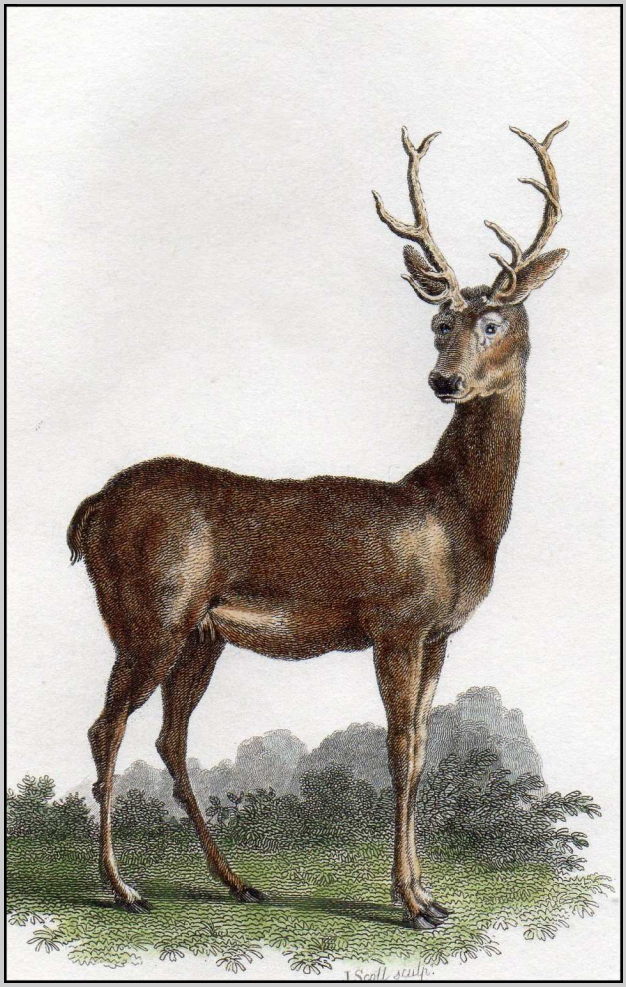
Alan Gates-
"With regard to the portrait of Mary [Thornton], it is currently attributed to Mason Chamberlin. Both portraits were inherited by the 9th Earl of Carlisle from the Barlow family in 1853. Mary Thornton was his great (x3) grandmother". (Correspondence from Christopher Ridgway, curator Castle Howard).

Hand Colored Engravings.
The original engravings as published were in black and white but were often hand colored to enhance the work and promote sales. I was fortunate to locate and successfully engage a talented colorist for many of the engravings found in this work. I highly recommend them if you have older engravings you wish to have hand colored. His name is Peter Frith and can be contacted on the Internet at http://handcolouring.co.uk or by e-mail. @ pwfrith8@gmail.com.

Arthur Credland-
Holderness, Chas. T. - *Some Driffield Incidents 117 Years Ago and After*. Driffield: printed at the Observer Office, 1908. In the first of three houses at the top of Harland-lane lived in reduced circumstances, Captain William Flint, a member of the sporting fraternity about the end of the 17th century, whose name is remembered by his riding in a race at York, in 1804, for a stake of a thousand guineas, with the wife of Colonel Thornton (whose sister he had married). Flint was the father of the late Mr. William Flint, who was a watchmaker and carried on business in Mill Street, in the shop now occupied by Mr. Wilson. Tailor, where he died about 40 years ago. ...Though it is 75 years since Captain Flint's medicine disagreed with him, the other day in Driffield, I met a lady who knew him well, and she described him as "a tall man, with a little wife."

John Swift
Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes, Vol. 60, July to December 1893, page 93.
"An exile from his native land, the magnificent Colonel expired at Paris in his eighty-first year, far away from the wife he had deserted, and from his legitimate son and heir whom he cut off with a legacy of £100. For some years he had lived with his mistress Miss Priscilla Duins in a corner of the vast Chateau de Chambord, which he rented as a tenant, living chiefly on the game, which he killed in the forest with his trusty Joe Manton. Such good qualities as he possessed-quick observation, activity of mind and body, good literary ability, a pleasant address, and excellent judgment about horses, hounds and hawks-were neutralized by the mendacity of the most unblushing kind and by a soaring and all-pervading vanity, of which he seemed wholly unconscious."

A Stag Hunt with Colonel Thornton in Spye Park, Wiltshire



Stag Eng. John Scott
Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

For that *Nimrod* of *Hunters*, so gallant and bold,
The brisk *Colonel* THORNTON, as *gay* as he's *old*,
Swore stoutly he'd give his Adventures a Sequel,
And produce such a *Hunt*—as no History can equal.

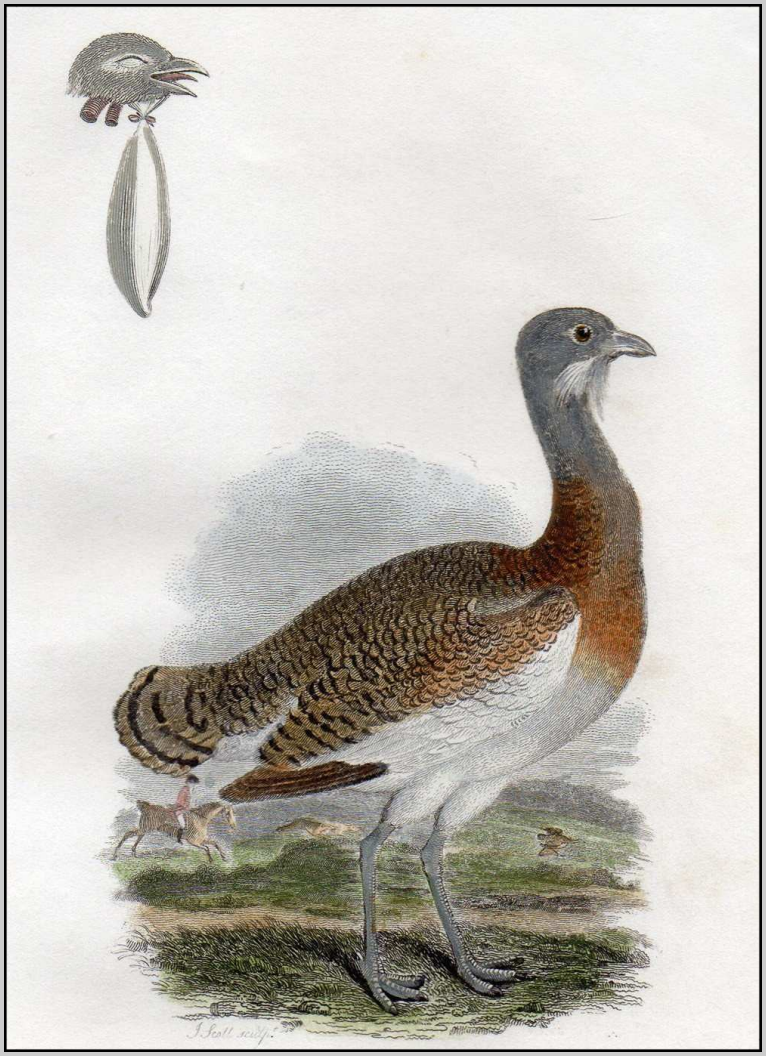
The Circles of *Fashion*, have settled, that AGE,
In Cheeses, in *Ladies*, in Wine, is the Rage,
So He vow'd, he would fully give *Fashion* its due,
And then turn'd out a *Stag*, which he christen'd—OLD Q.
The *Hounds* he selected—the Pack of all Packs—
Had *nothing* but *plenty of* AGE, on their Backs;
While the Leader of all, little MODISH appears,
"A beautiful Bitch, aged *thirty-five Years!*"
The COLONEL, the Picture of TIME, took a Freak
On a worn-out old Hunter, called—*Modern Antique*;
Yet, spite of hard Work, looking beauteously *fresh*,
Only low, like its MASTER, in *Spirit* and *Flesh*.

The Stag once turn'd down, Horse and Dog went away,
And for Forty long Miles, made most exquisite Play,
Till one—then another—fell jaded with Pain,
And the *dead* and the *dying*, strew'd SALISBURY PLAIN.
Two Couples still hunted, unconquer'd and tough;
But the *Stag* now declaring—"*He thought he'd enough;*"
And the *Stag-hounds*, not less than the COLONEL, well-bred,
Beg'd leave to decline it—their Stomachs were fled.
But a *Knife* did the business! and cut the last Twig
Of the Life of *that* STAG—who now died like a PIG!

And now came of all, the most difficult Bout,
To pick up the Rags of this "revellous Rout"—
Some *Fox-hounds*, some *Greyhounds*, some *Terriers*, some *Curs*;
Some Riders with Boots, and some Boots without Spurs;

Proud Ponies, whose Pride had experienc'd a *Fall*;
And JUPITER Hunters—unable to *crawl!*—
The COLONEL and *Horse*, as the Evening grew dark,
Were safely convey'd in a *Cart*, to SPY PARK!
While MODISH, whose Gaiety never could fail,
Delightfully gambol'd about—the Cart's Tail.

Be proud then, *Old* SARUM! and long let the Strain,
'Midst the Chalk-pits and Shepherds, of SALISBURY'S *Plain*—
O! long let thy Vallies re-echo the Song,
Of a Hunting so feeble! so aged! so long!—
Abounding with Facts, which no History can mention—
And pompously grac'd by—the FLOWERS of INVENTION!!



Bustard Eng. John Scott

Once hunted by Colonel Thornton in Spye Park, Wiltshire, these birds proved too elusive for his hawks.

Rural Sports by Rev. William B. Daniel-1801

Waiting for Colonel Thornton?

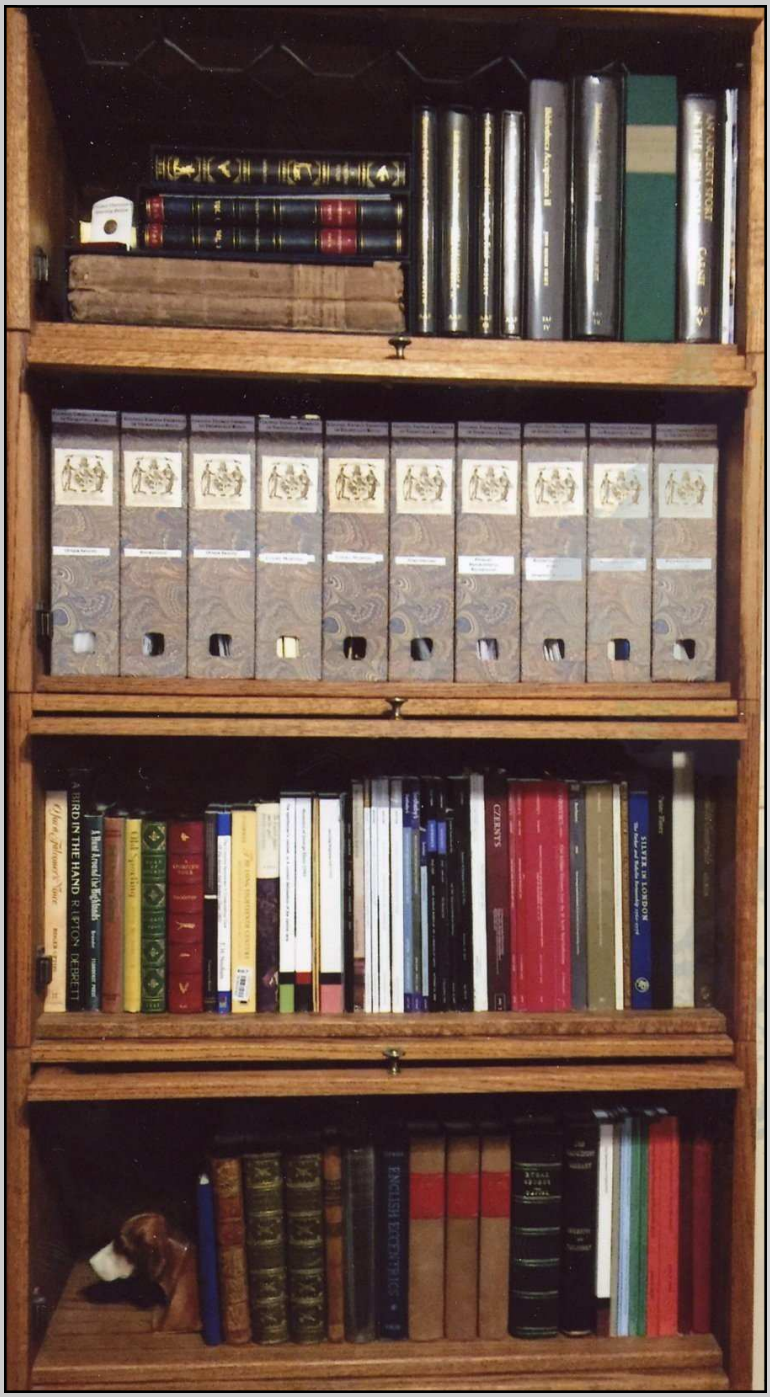
Edwin Landseer ***Horses, Dogs and Hawks*** 1835

Colonel Thornton was said to have called for his dogs and horse and they were waiting at the door when he died.

Courtesy: Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

A Preliminary Sketch By An Unknown Artist

The Colonel Thornton Library



All these works were used in the preparation of the Colonel Thornton Biography
All of the original works were used and the black and white plates were sent to England to be hand colored for use in this work. This entire collection has been sold and dispersed to other collectors.

blurb

The Thornton Silver Gilt Tea Urn

The Most Famous Piece of Falconry Memorabilia
Permanently Exhibited at
The Archives of Falconry in Boise Idaho